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THE

WORKS

OF

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PREFACE.

THE Science of Theology in its most general meaning, as comprehensive both of the Natural and the Revealed, might, in respect to the order of its topics and propositions, be presented to the disciple in two different ways—so as, if not to affect the substance of its various arguments, at least to affect the succession of them. According to the first way, a commencement is made, as if at the fountain-head of the whole theme, with the being and the constitution and the character of God; and then from this point of departure, a demonstration is carried forward in the footsteps of the history of the divine administration, from the first purposes of the uncreated mind to the final issues of His government in eternity. This most frequently is the course of those Christian writers, who attempt the construction of an entire system of Theology. They descend from the heights of the eternity that is past; and, often, it is not till they have bestowed their treatment on such antemundane topics as the mysteries of the divine essence and the high pre-ordinations of God, that

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they enter on the development of these in the creation of a universe and its moral history onward to the consummation of all things. One cannot peruse the successive titles of the chapters in the systematic works of our best and greatest authors, without observing how much the arrangement proceeds in the chronological order of the history of the divine government—so that, after the establishment of the initial lessons which we have now specified, we are very generally conducted along some such series of doctrines as the following—the formation of man; his original state of innocence; the introduction of moral evil at the fall, and the consequent guilt and depravation of our species; the remedy for this universal disease in the appointment of a Mediator; the atonement made by Him, so as to release his followers from the penalty of sin; the doctrine of a regenerating Spirit to deliver them from its power; the free overtures of this reconciliation and recovery to the world; the great moral change experienced by all who accept them; their duties in the present life, and their blissful prospects of another: on the other hand the fearful doom of all who reject the Christian message; the judgment to which both the obedient and the rebellious will be summoned at the end of the world; and the destinies which respectively await them, in that everlasting economy which is

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to succeed after the present economy of things shall have passed away.

Now such an arrangement, proceeding as it does in the chronological order of the divine administration, and which quadrates too with the great successions that take place in the collective history of the species, has peculiar advantages of its own. But there is another arrangement, having a distinct principle, attended too with its own distinct benefits, but of another sort. Instead of treating Theology in the order of the procedure of the divine government, and with general respect therefore to the whole Universe of created Intelligences or at least to the whole of the human family, it may be treated in the order of those inquiries which are natural to the exercised spirit of an individual man, from the outset of his religious earnestness when the felt supremacy of conscience within tells him of a Law and tells him of a Lawgiver—when his own sense of innumerable deficiencies from a higher and a holier standard of rectitude than he has ever reached, first visits him with the conviction of guilt and the dread anticipation of a coming vengeance. This would give rise to an arrangement differing from the former, having a different starting-post or point of departure, and, though coinciding in some places, yet reversing the order of certain of the topics;

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and, more especially, transferring to a far ulterior part of its course, some of those initial matters in the first arrangement, which, when discussed at so early a stage give an obscure and transcendental character to the very commencement of the science. By the first arrangement we are made to descend synthetically, from principles which have their residence in the constitution and character of the Godhead, and which transport us back to past eternity—as in those systems of Christian Theology, where the doctrines of the Trinity and Predestination take the priority of all those themes which are within the reach of human conception, or bear with immediate application on the desires and the doings of man. By the second arrangement, we are made to ascend in the order of man's fears and of his efforts to be relieved from them—beginning, therefore, with that sense of God which is so promptly and powerfully suggested to every man by his own moral nature; and proceeding, under the impulse of apprehensive and conscious guilt, to the consideration of what must be done to escape from its consequences, and what is the remedy if any for the sore disease under which humanity labours. It is obvious that with such a commencement as this for our System of Theology, the depravity of man, along with the moral character and government of God, and the

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requisitions and sanctions of His law, would find an early place in it; and, whereas in the atonement made known by a professed Revelation there is a remedy proposed, it were most natural to pass onward to the claims and credentials of this professed embassy from Heaven—thence, under the promptings of a desire for relief, from the consideration of our danger to the consideration of the refuge opened up for us in the Gospel—thence to the new life required of all its disciples—thence to the promised aids of a strength and grace from on high, for the fulfilment of our due obedience—thence to the issues of our repentance and faith in a deathless eternity—thence, finally, and after the settlement of all that was practical and pressing, to the solution of difficulties which are grappled with at the outset of the former scheme of Theology; but which in the latter scheme would be postponed for their more scientific treatment to that stage, when, leaving the first principles of their discipleship, the aspirants after larger views and more recondite mysteries go on unto perfection.

By the former method Theology is capable of being presented more in the form or aspect of a regular science, with the orderly descent and derivation of its propositions from the highest principles to which we can ascend; but when the

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departure is made from the primeval designs of the Godhead, or the profound mysteries of his nature —this gives more of a transcendental, but more at the same time of a presumptuous and *a priori* character, to the whole contemplation. The second method, by which departure is made from the suggestions and the fears of human conscience, has the recommendation of being more practical and, if not in the order of exposition, is more at least in the order of discovery. Even Natural Theology, taken by itself, is susceptible of both these treatments; and may be either studied as the Theology of academic demonstration, or traced to its outgoings as the Theology of Conscience— from the first stirrings of human feelings or human fancy on the question of a God, to the fullest discoveries that can be made by the light of Nature whether of His existence or His character or His ways. In the following treatise we do not rigorously adhere to any of these methods—though we hold it incumbent upon us, to clear away the injurious metaphysics, in which certain disciples of the first school have, even in their earliest, their initial lessons on the subject, shrouded the science of Theology; and we have also endeavoured to show what those incipient, those rudimental tendencies of the human spirit are, under the guidance of which the disciples of the second school are carried

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onward in the path of inquiry. In the execution of these tasks we have occupied the first Book, having the title of Preliminary Views; and would now bespeak the indulgence of our readers for what some might deem the superfluous illustration of its two first, and others might feel to be the hopeless and impracticable obscurity of its two succeeding chapters. The latter complaint should be laid, we think, not on the Author, but on the necessities of his subject. To the former however he must plead guilty; for, even though at the expense of nauseating those of quick and powerful understanding; and whose taste is more for the profound than the palpable, however important the truth inculcated may be and however desirable to have the luminous conception and intense feeling of it—he should rejoice to be the instrument, and more particularly at the outset of their religious earnestness, of giving the most plain and intelligible notices of their way even unto babes.

We shall not be so liable to either of these extremes in the subsequent Books of which this treatise is composed—and the perusal of which indeed might be immediately entered on, although the first or preliminary Book were to receive the treatment that is often given to a long and wearisome preface, that is, passed over altogether. We must confess however our desire for the judgment

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of the more profound class of readers on the fourth chapter in this department of the work, and which treats of a peculiar argument by Hume on the side of Atheism. The truth is that we do not conceive the infidelity of this philosopher to have been adequately met, by any of his opponents; whether as it respects the question of a God or the question of the truth of Christianity. In the management of both controversies, it has been thought necessary to conjure up a new principle for the purpose of refuting his especial sophistries; and thus to make two gratuitous, and we think very questionable additions, to the mental philosophy—in the shape of two distinct and original laws of the human understanding, which, anterior to the date of his speculations, never had been heard of; and probably never would, but for the service which they were imagined to render in the battles of the faith. We hold ourselves independent of both these auxiliaries; and it is our attempt to show on the premises of the author himself, or at least with the help of no other principles than the universal and uniform faith of men in the lessons of experience, now of his atheistical, and afterwards of his deistical argument—the one grounded on the alleged singularity of the world as an effect, the other grounded on the alleged incompetency of human testimony to accredit the truth of a miracle

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—we hope to show that there is a distinct fallacy in each, and at the same time a contradiction between the fallacies in itself destructive of both; and which must either have escaped the penetration, or been concealed by the art of this most subtle metaphysician and reasoner.

After having disposed in the first Book of all that is of a prefatory or general character, we in the second Book enter on the consideration of proofs for the being of a God in the dispositions of matter. The third Book is occupied with proofs, not for the being only, but for the being and character of God as displayed in the constitution of the mind—from which department it has been strangely affirmed of late, that little or no evidence has yet been collected for the defence or illustration of Natural Theology. The object of the fourth Book, is to exhibit additional evidence for a God in the adaptation of External Nature to the Mental Constitution of Man. And in the fifth, which is the last Book, we endeavour to estimate the amount as well as the dimness and deficiency of the light of nature in respect to its power of discovering either the character or still less the counsels and the ways of God. In this concluding part of the treatise, beside recording the efforts which Philosophy has made, and to what degree she has failed in resolving that most tremendous and appalling of all mysteries, the Origin of Evil, we attempt to

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reconcile both the doctrine of a Special Providence and the efficacy of prayer with the constancy of visible nature. It is well to evince, not the success only, but the shortcomings of Natural Theology; and thus to make palpable at the same time both her helplessness and her usefulness—helpless if trusted to as a guide or an informer on the way to heaven; but most useful if, under a sense of her felt deficiency, we seek for a place of enlargement and are led onward to the higher manifestations of Christianity.

EDINBURGH, 15*th Dec.*, 1835.

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BOOK I.

PRELIMINARY VIEWS.

CHAPTER I.

On the Distinction between the Ethics of Theology and the Objects of Theology.

1. Our first remark on the science of Theology is, that the objects of it, by their remoteness, and by their elevation, seem to be inaccessible. The objects of the other sciences are either placed, as those of matter, within the ken of our senses; or, as in the science of mind, they come under a nearer and more direct recognition still, by the faculty of consciousness. But no man hath seen God at any time. We "have neither heard His voice nor seen His shape." And neither do the felt operations of our own busy and ever-thinking spirits immediately announce themselves to be the stirrings of the divinity within us. So that the knowledge of that Being, whose existence, and whose character, and whose ways, it is the business of Theology to investigate, and the high purpose of Theology to ascertain, stands distinguished from all other knowledge by the peculiar avenues through which it is conveyed to us. We feel Him not. We behold Him not. And however palpably He may stand forth

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to our convictions, in the strength of those appropriate evidences which it is the province of this science to unfold—certain it is, that we can take no direct cognizance of Him by our faculties whether of external or internal observation.

2. And while the spirituality of His nature places Him beyond the reach of our direct cognizance, there are certain other essential properties of His nature which place Him beyond the reach of our possible comprehension. Let me instance the past eternity of the Godhead. One might figure a futurity that never ceases to flow, and which has no termination; but who can climb his ascending way among the obscurities of that infinite which is behind him? Who can travel in thought along the track of generations gone by, till he has overtaken the eternity which lies in that direction? Who can look across the millions of ages which have elapsed, and from an ulterior post of observation look again to another and another succession of centuries; and at each further extremity in this series of retrospects, stretch backward his regards on an antiquity as remote and indefinite as ever? Could we by any number of successive strides over these mighty intervals, at length reach the fountain-head of duration, our spirits might be at rest. But to think of duration as having no fountain-head; to think of time with no beginning; to uplift the imagination along the heights of an antiquity which hath positively no summit; to soar these upward steeps till dizzied by the altitude we can keep no longer on the wing; for the mind to make these repeated flights from one pinnacle to another, and instead

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of scaling the mysterious elevation, to lie baffled at its foot, or lose itself among the far, the long-withdrawing recesses of that primeval distance, which at length merges away into a fathomless unknown; this is an exercise utterly discomfiting to the puny faculties of man. We are called on to stir ourselves up that we may take hold of God, but the "clouds and darkness which are round about Him" seem to repel the enterprise as hopeless; and man, as if overborne by a sense of littleness, feels as if nothing can be done but to make prostrate obeisance of all his faculties before Him.

3. Or, if instead of viewing the Deity in relation to time we view Him in relation to space, we shall feel the mystery of his being to be alike impracticable and impervious. But we shall not again venture on aught so inconceivable, yet the reality of which so irresistibly obtrudes itself upon the mind, as immensity without limits; nor shall we presume one conjecture upon a question which we have no means of resolving, whether the Universe have its terminating outskirts; and so, however stupendous to our eye, shrink by its very finitude, to an atom, in the midst of that unoccupied and unpeopled vastness by which it is surrounded. Let us satisfy ourselves with a humbler flight. Let us carry the speculation no further than our senses have carried it. Let us but take account of the suns and systems which the telescope has unfolded; though for aught we know there might, beyond the furthest range of this instrument, be myriads of remoter suns and remoter systems. Let us, however, keep within the circle of our

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actual discoveries, within the limits of that scene which we know to be peopled with realities; and instead of trying to dilate our imagination to the infinity beyond it, let us but think of God as sitting in state and in high sovereignty over millions of other worlds beside our own. If this Earth which we know and know so imperfectly form so small a part of His works—what an emphasis it gives to the lesson that we indeed know a very small part of his ways. "These are part of his ways," said a holy man of old, "but how little a portion is heard of Him." Here the revelations of Astronomy, in our modern day, accord with the direct spiritual revelations of a former age. In this sentiment at least the Patriarch and the Philosopher are at one; and highest science meets and is in harmony with deepest sacredness. So that we construct the same lesson, whether we employ the element of space or the element of time. With the one the basis of the argument is the ephemeral experience of our little day. With the other the basis of the argument is the contracted observation of our little sphere. They both alike serve to distance man from the infinite the everlasting God.

4. But it will somewhat dissipate this felt obscurity of the science, and give more of distinctness and definiteness to the whole of this transcendental contemplation—if we distinguish aright between the Ethics of Theology, and the Objects of Theology.

5. To understand this distinction let us conceive some certain relation between two individual

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men—as that for example of a benefactor to a dependant, or of one who has conferred a kindness to another who has received it. There is a moral or ethical propriety that springs out of this relation. It is that of gratitude from the latter of these individuals to the former of them. Gratitude is the incumbent virtue in such a case, and a benefactor is the object of that virtue.

6. Now to make one feel the truth of the ethical principle, it matters not whether he has seen many or few benefactors in the course of his experience. Nay, it matters not whether there are many or few benefactors in the world. The moral propriety of gratitude is that which attaches to the relation between a benefactor and a dependant; and it equally remains so whether the relation be seldom or often exemplified. Nay, gratitude would be the appropriate virtue of this relation, although actually it were never exemplified at all. The ethical principle of the virtuousness of gratitude does not depend on the existent reality of an object for this virtue. Let a benefactor really exist; and then gratitude is due to him. Or let a benefactor only be supposed to exist; and then we affirm with as great readiness that gratitude would be due to him. The incumbent morality is alike recognised—whether we behold a real object, or only figure to ourselves a hypothetical one. The morality, in fact, does not depend for its rightness on any such contingency, as the actual and substantive existence of a proper object to which it may be rendered. The virtuousness of gratitude would remain a stable category in ethical science; although, never

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once exemplified in the living world of realities, we derived our only notion of it from the possibilities which were contemplated in an ideal world of relations.

7. It is thus that whether much or little conversant with the objects of a virtue, there may of the virtue itself be a clear and vivid apprehension. A peasant, all whose experience is limited to the homestead of his own little walk, can recognise the virtuousness of gratitude and justice and truth with as great correctness, and feel them too with as great intenseness, as the man of various and ample intercourse, who has traversed a thousand times wider sphere in human society. By enlarging the field of observation we may extend our acquaintance with the objects of moral science; but this does not appear at all indispensable to our acquaintance with the Ethics of the science. To appreciate aright the moral propriety which belongs to any given relation, we do not need to multiply the exemplifications or the cases of it. The one is not a thing of observation as the other is, and therefore not a thing to which the Baconian or inductive method of investigation is in the same manner applicable. Our knowledge of the objects belongs to the Philosophy of Facts. Our knowledge of the Ethics belongs to another and a distinct Philosophy.

8. There has been too much arrogated for the philosophy of Lord Bacon in our day. "Quid est?" is the only question to the solution of which it is applicable. It is by observation that we ascertain what are the objects in Nature; and what are, or have been, the events in the history of Nature.

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But there is another question wholly distinct from this, "Quid oportet?" to the solution of which we are guided by another light than that of experience. This question lies without the domain of the Inductive Philosophy, and the science to whose cognizance it belongs shines upon us by the light of its own immediate evidence. There may have been a just and a luminous Ethics, even when the lessons of the experimental philosophy were most disregarded; and, on the other hand, it is the office of this philosophy to rectify and extend physical, but not to rectify and extend moral science.*

9. On this subject there is an instructive analogy taken from another science, and which illustrates still more the distinction now stated between the objects and the ethics of Moral Philosophy;†

* We mean not to deny the legitimate application of the Baconian Philosophy to mental science—a distinct thing from moral science. The philosophy which directs and presides over the investigation of facts has to do with the facts and phenomena of mind, as well as those of matter; and though the sanguine anticipations of Reid and Stewart, of a vast coming enlargement in the science of mind, from the call which they had sounded for the treatment of it by the inductive method, have not been realized—it is not the less true that the philosophy which has for its object the determination of the *Quid est* throughout all the departments of observational truth, has to do with the facts of the mental world, as well as with those of the material world, and with the classification of both. But the feelings and purposes of the mind viewed as phenomena, present a different object of investigation altogether, from those feelings and purposes viewed in relation to their rightness or wrongness. The latter is the object of moral science. And when we say that the office of Lord Bacon's philosophy is to rectify and extend physical, but not to rectify moral science, let it be understood that the physical includes phenomena and facts wherever they are to be found—more especially the phenomena of man's spiritual and intellectual nature, the physics of the mind, the mental physiology of Dr. Thomas Brown, the pneumatology of an older generation.

† Moral Philosophy is here understood in its most generic

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that is, the distinction between the mathematics and the objects of Natural Philosophy.

10. The objects of Natural Philosophy are the facts or data of the science. The knowledge of these is only to be obtained by observation. Jupiter placed at a certain distance from the sun, and moving in a certain direction, and with a certain velocity, is an object. His satellites, with their positions and their motions, are also so many objects. Any piece of matter, including those attributes which it is the part of Natural Philosophy to take cognizance of, such as weight, and magnitude, and movement, and situation, is an object of this science. Altogether they form what may be called the individual and existent realities of the science. And Lord Bacon has done well in having demonstrated that for the knowledge of these we must give ourselves up exclusively to the informations of experience; that is, to obtain a knowledge of the visible properties of material things we must look at them, or of their tangible properties we must handle them, or of their weights or motions or distances we must measure them.

11. Thus far, then, do the applications of the Baconian Philosophy go, and no farther. After that the facts or objects of the science have in this way been ascertained, we perceive certain mathematical relations between the objects from which we can derive truths and properties innumerable. But it is not experience now which lights us on from one truth or property to another. The objects

meaning, as comprehensive of the duties owing to God in heaven, as well as to our fellow-men upon earth.

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or data of the science are ascertained by the evidence of observation; but the mathematics of the science proceed on an evidence of their own, and land us in sound and stable mathematical conclusions, whether the data at the outset of the reasoning be real or hypothetical. The moral proprieties founded on equity between man and man would remain like so many fixtures in ethical science, though the whole species were swept away, and no man could be found to exemplify our conclusions. The mathematical properties founded on an equality between line and line would in like manner abide as eternal truths in geometry, although matter were swept away from the universe, and there remained no bodies whose position or whose distances had to be reasoned on. It has been already said that we do not need to extend the domain of observation in order to have a clear and a right notion of the moral proprieties; and it may now be said that we do not need to extend the domain of observation in order to have a clear and a right notion of the mathematical properties. If straight lines be drawn between the centres of the earth and the sun and Jupiter, they would constitute a triangle, the investigation of whose properties might elicit much important truth on the relations of these three bodies. But all that is purely mathematical in the truth would remain, although it were not exemplified, or although these three bodies had no existence. Nay, the triangle might serve as the exemplar of an infinity of triangles, which required only a corresponding infinity of objects, in order that the general and abstract truth might become the symbol or

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representative of an endless host of applicable and actually existent truths. For the objects of both sciences you must have inductive or observational evidence; but by a moral light in the one science, and a mathematical light in the other, we arrive at the ethics of the first science, at the mathematics of the second, without the aid of the inductive philosophy.

12. It is interesting to note if aught may have fallen from Lord Bacon himself upon this subject. In his English treatise on "the advancement of learning," he says, "that in mathematics I can report no deficience." So that this great author of the experimental method by which to arrive at a true philosophy of facts, had no improvement to propose on the methods of mathematical investigation. And in his more extended Latin treatise on the same subject, entitled, "De augmentis scientiarum," where he takes so comprehensive a view of all the possible objects of human knowledge, he says, speaking of geometry and arithmetic, "Quæ duo artes, magno certe cum acumine, et industria, inquisitæ et tractatæ sunt: veruntamen et Euclidis laboribus in geometricis nihil additum est a sequentibus quod intervallo tot seculorum dignum sit;" or "which two arts have certainly been investigated and handled with much acuteness and industry; notwithstanding which, however, nothing has been added to the labours of Euclid in geometry by those who have followed him, that is worthy of so long a series of ages."

13. The proper discrimination then to be made in natural philosophy, is between the facts or data of the science, and the relations that by means of

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mathematics might be educed from these data. The former are ascertained by observation—after which no further aid is required from observation, while we prosecute that reasoning which often brings the most weighty and important discoveries in its train. It is well to consider how much can be achieved by mathematics in this process, and how distinct its part is from that of wide and distant observation; insomuch that by the light which it strikes out in the little chamber of one's own thoughts, we are enabled to proceed from one doctrine and discovery to another. From three distant points in the firmament, a triangle may be formed to which the very mathematics are applicable that we employ upon a triangle constructed upon paper by our own fingers. Whether they be the positions and the distances that lie within the compass of a diagram, or the positions and distances that obtain in wide immensity, it is one and the same geometry which, from a few simple and ascertained data, guides the inquirer to the various and important relations of both. After that observation hath done its office, and made over to mathematics the materials which it hath gathered—this latter science can guide the way to discoveries and applications innumerable; and without one look more upon the heavens, with nought but the student's concentrated regard on the lines and the symbols that lie in little room upon his table, might the whole mystery and mechanism of the heavens be unravelled.

14. Let those things, then, be rightly distinguished which are distinct from one another. They were not the objects of the science which gave the

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observer his mathematics. These objects were only addressed to his previous and independent mathematics; and he, in virtue of his mathematics, was enabled rightly to estimate many important relations which subsisted between the objects. Nay, it is conceivable that the objects might have remained for ever obscure and unknown to him. He, in this case, would have wanted an application which he now has for his mathematics; but the mathematics themselves would have been still as much within his reach or his power of acquisition as before. His mathematical nature, if we may so speak, would have been entire notwithstanding; and he have had as clear a sense of the mathematical relations, and as prompt and powerful a faculty of prosecuting these to their results. Things might have been so constituted, as that every star in the firmament should have been beyond the discernment of our naked eye; or what is still more conceivable, the lucky invention might never have been made by which the wonders of a remoter heavens have been laid open to our view. But still they were neither the informations of the eye nor of the telescope which furnished man with his geometry; they only furnished him with data for his geometry. And thus, while the objects of astronomy are brought to him by a light from afar—there enters, as a constituent part of the science, the mathematics of astronomy, immediately seen by him in the light of his own spirit, and to master the lessons of which he needs not so much as one excursion of thought beyond the precincts of his own little home.

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15. Now, what is true of the mathematical may be also true of the moral relations. We may have the faculty of perceiving these relations whether they be occupied by actually existent objects or not; or although we should be in ignorance of the objects. On the imagination that one of the inhabitants of the planet Jupiter had the mysterious knowledge of all my movements, and a mysterious power of guidance and protection over me; that he eyed me with constant benevolence, and ever acted the part of my friend and my guardian—I could immediately pronounce on the gratitude and the kind regard that were due from me back again: And should the imagination become a reality, and be authentically made known to me as such, I have a moral nature, a law within my heart, which already tells me how I should respond to this communication. The instance is extravagant; but it enables us at once to perceive what that is which must be fetched to us from without, and what that is which we have to meet it from within. The objects are either made known by observation; or, if they exist without the limits of observation, they are made known by the credible report or revelation of others. But when thus made known, they may meet with a prior and a ready made Ethics in ourselves. The objects may be placed beyond the limits of human experience; but though the knowledge of their existence must therefore be brought to us from afar, a sense of the correspondent moralities which are due to them may arise spontaneously in our bosoms. After the mind has gotten, in whatever way, its information of their reality—

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then within the little cell of its own feelings and its own thoughts, there may be a light which manifests the appropriate ethics for the most distant beings in the universe.

16. We are thus enabled to bestow a certain amount of elucidation on a question which falls most properly to be discussed at the outset of Natural Theology. On this distinction between the ethics of the science and the objects of the science, we can proceed at least a certain way in assigning their respective provinces to the light of nature and the light of revelation. But for this purpose let us shortly recur again to the illustration that may be taken from the science of astronomy.

17. Natural Philosophy has two great departments—one of them celestial, the other terrestrial; and it may be thought a very transcendental movement on the part of an inquirer, a movement altogether *per saltum*, when he passes from the one to the other. Now this is true; but only should it be remarked in as far as it regards the objects of the science. The objects of the celestial lie in a far more elevated region than the objects of the terrestrial; and it may certainly be called a transcendental movement, when, instead of viewing with the telescope some lofty peak that is sustained however on the world's surface, we view therewith the planet that floats in the firmament and at an inconceivably greater distance away from it. There is a movement *per saltum* when we pass from the facts and data of the one department, to the facts and data of the other. But there is no such move-

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ment when we pass from the mathematics of the one department to the mathematics of the other. There is, no doubt, in one respect, a very wide transition; when instead of a triangle, whose base-line is taken by a pair of compasses from the Gunter scale, or even measured by a chain on the surface of the earth, we are called to investigate the relations of a triangle whose base-line is the diameter of the earth, or perhaps the diameter of the earth's orbit. There is doubtless a very wide transition from the objects of the terrestrial to those of the celestial physics; when, instead of three indivisible points on the parchment that lies before us, or three signposts of observation that wave on mountain-tops within sight of each other, we have three planetary bodies that, huge though they be in themselves, shrink into atoms when compared with the mighty spaces that lie between them. The fields of observation are wholly different; but it is by the very same trigonometry that we achieve the computation of the resulting triangles. And we again repeat that, sublime as the ascent may be from the facts or data of the one computation to those of the other, there is no gigantic or impracticable stride in their mathematics—that if able to trace certain curves in the page which lies before us, we are further able to scan the cycles of astronomy—that, widely apart as are the revelations of this wondrous science from the conceptions of our first and ordinary experience, yet grant but the facts, and it is by the dint of a familiar and ordinary mathematics, that the mind can ascend to them. It is thus that though

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in person we never stepped beyond the humble glen of our nativity, we may have that within the depository of our thoughts, which guides us to the certainties that be on the outskirts of creation. Within the little home of our bosom, there lie such principles and powers, as without one mile of locomotion are of as great avail, as if we could have traversed the infinities of space with the plumb-line in our hand, or carried the torch of discovery round the universe. It does look a marvel and a mystery, how man is able to climb the steep and lofty ascent from the terrestrial to the celestial in Natural Philosophy. But it helps to resolve the mystery, when we thus advert to the distinction between the facts or objects of the science, and the mathematics of the science. It at least tells us what that is, wherein the transition from the one department to the other lies; and gives us to understand that, could we in any way ascertain by observation, certain of the motions and magnitudes that belong to the upper regions of astronomy, there is an instrument within our reach, by which we may come to the accurate determination of its laws.

18. And as with Natural, so with Moral, Philosophy. The former hath its objects, whose properties are found by observation; and these objects have their mathematical relations, most of which are found without observation, by an abstract and solitary exercise of mind on the data which have been previously ascertained. There is a great difference between the terrestrial and the celestial physics, in regard to the way by which we arrive at the data. On the one field they are near at

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hand; and at all events do not lie beyond the confines of the globe which we inhabit. On the other field they have place and occupancy at an exceeding distance away from us. The eye in quest of them must lift itself above all earthly objects; and often beyond the ken of our natural vision, they would have been for ever unknown—had not the telescope, that powerful instrument of revelation, fetched them to the men of our world, from those far and hidden obscurities in which they had lain for ages. But whatever the difference may be between the terrestrial and the celestial physics, in regard to the way by which we arrive at their data—there is no such difference in regard to the way through which, by a mathematical process of reasoning, truths are educed from these data. It matters not whether they be the elements of some terrestrial survey, or the observed elements of some distant planet that have been committed to a formula, and made over to the investigations of the analyst. It was indeed a far loftier flight, when in the capacity of an observer, he passed from the stations and the objects of a landscape below to those of the upper firmament. But there was no transition, at all corresponding to this—when passing from the mathematics of the one contemplation to the mathematics of the other. Even at the time when he labours to determine the form or the periods of some heavenly orbit, his mind is only in contact with the symbols of that formula, or with the lines and spaces of that little diagram, which is before his eyes. It is enough that the triangle which comprehends any portion however small of his

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paper, hath the same relations and properties with the triangle which comprehends any portion however large of immensity. It is enough that what is predicated of the line which extends but a few inches may also be predicated of the same line when prolonged to the outskirts of creation. And thus it is, that after observation hath done its work and collected what may be styled the facts of Astronomy, there is a capability in the human spirit, and upon no other materials than what may lie within the compass of a table, to unravel the principles of its wondrous mechanism—and in the little chamber of thought, to elaborate a doctrine which shall truly represent the universe and is realized in its most distant processes.

19. Now whence were the mathematics by which he made an achievement so marvellous—whence were these mathematics derived? For our purpose it is a sufficient answer to this question that he had not to go abroad for them. They may have enabled him to scan the cycles of heaven—but most certainly heaven's lofty concave is not the page from which his geometry was drawn. To obtain the necessary mathematics he has not to travel beyond the limits of his own humble apartment—and though in person he may have never wandered from the secluded valley that bounds his habitation, yet, such is the power of this home instrument, that it can carry him in thought through the remotest provinces of nature, and give him the intellectual mastery over them. He needs not have gone half-a-mile in quest of those conceptions which lie in little room within the receptacle of his

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bosom. There may have been some obscurely initial or rudimental business of observation at the outset of his mental history, ere his notions of a line or a number or a quantity were settled; but it is an observation that might have all been carried on within a cell or a hermitage: And the important thing to be remarked is, that these notions, of homeward growth and origin though they be, are available on the field of the celestial as well as on that of the terrestrial Physics—and that when once by observation the respective data of each are ascertained, the same mathematics are applicable to both.

20. And it is just so in Moral Philosophy. This science hath its objects that are ascertained by observation—and, apart from these, it hath its Ethics, in virtue of which it can assign the moral relations that subsist between these objects. The facts of the science are just as distinct from the ethics of the science, as the facts of Natural Philosophy are from the mathematics of Natural Philosophy. By observation we can know of certain particulars in the state, or of certain passages in the history of two human beings—and, not by means of any further observation, but by certain ethical principles and by these alone, we can pronounce on the moral relationship that is between them, and on the proprieties of that relationship. Let us but know of any two men, that the one is a friendly and disinterested benefactor, and that the other is a dependant on his liberalities—or of the one that he is the generous lender, and of the other that he is the debtor who had promised and

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is now in circumstances to repay—or of the one that he is an injured party, and of the other that he is now a prostrate offender honestly offering every reparation, and pouring out from the sincerity of a contrite bosom the acknowledgments and the vows of a deep-felt repentance: these are the facts of so many distinct cases presented to view either by our own observation or by the credible testimony of others; and it is not by means of any further observation, it is not by the aid of any additional facts that we learn what be the moralities which belong to each of them. Observation, whether in Natural or in Moral Philosophy, furnishes only the data. It is by a mathematics in the one case, and by an ethics in the other that we draw our conclusions from these data. The gratitude that we should render to a benefactor, the fidelity that we should observe with a creditor, the forgiveness that we should award to a penitent: these are not the lessons of observation any more than the axioms or the demonstrated truths of geometry. And as in Natural Philosophy we should distinguish between the facts of every question and its mathematics; so is there a similar distinction to be observed between the facts and the ethics of every question in Moral Philosophy.*

* While impressing the distinction between the ethics and the objects of Theology, it may be asked whence did our knowledge of the ethics originate—and how is it that they differ in respect of origination from our knowledge of the objects? We have already remarked that some rudimental, some obscurely initial process of observation, may, for aught we know, have been concerned in the first evolution whether of our ethical or our mathematical conceptions; but that after these conceptions had been formed, there was no further observation necessary on our part

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21. This helps us to understand what the precise nature of the transition is, when we pass from the terrestrial to the celestial of moral science. We pass to other data; but we have the same

for the completion of the respective systems of these two sciences. It is very likely that had we never been in converse either by touch or sight with external substances, we might never have attained our present notions of position or direction or quantity; and so the principles of our mathematical nature might have lain in dormancy and never been evolved. And it is just as likely that, had we never been in converse with other sentient creatures like ourselves, we might never have attained our present notions of equity or of other moral relations; and so the principles of our moral nature might have lain in dormancy too and never been evolved. These principles are ultimate facts in the human constitution, not communicated to us from external objects, but called forth into actual and sensible exercise by the contact as it were and excitement of these objects. It was not the observation of things without us which deposited them in our minds; though, apart from the observation of things without us, the principles, whether ethical or mathematical, might never have been wakened into action and have never been recognised. But whether observation gave these principles at the first or only evolved them, it truly affects not either the reality or the importance of the distinction on which we have been insisting. Enough, that, some how or other, there be a mathematics in Natural Philosophy, which, without the aid of further observation, can, by a peculiar light of its own, guide the investigating spirit from one truth and discovery to another, and elicit doctrines that admit of application to thousands of the known objects in nature, and to an infinity of objects that are yet unknown; and it is in like manner enough, that, some how or other, there be an ethics in Moral Philosophy, which, without the aid of further observation, can, by a peculiar light of its own, guide us from one moral doctrine to another, applicable alike to the existent beings that lie within the sphere of our knowledge, and to those, who, though at present without this sphere, may, on coming forth by revelation to our notice, call out the very regards and moral recognitions that already had long been familiar to us. The difference established by Dr. Whately between the truths which we receive by information and those which we receive by instruction, so far from being placed in opposition to these views, just serves to illustrate and confirm them. The truths of mere information have no logical dependence, the one upon the other; and each is made known to us on a distinct and separate evidence of its own. It follows not because

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ethics—just as when in physical science we elevate our regards from the earth we tread upon to the sublime movements of astronomy, we pass to other data but have the same mathematics. He who can resolve a triangle whose angles are indivisible points on the parchment that lies before him, can resolve a triangle whose angles are planets in the firmament—and all that he requires to know are the facts or the objects of the celestial physics, to make his mathematics as available in that Natural Philosophy whose field is the heavens, as he may have already made them in that Natural Philosophy whose field is this lower world. In like manner he who can assign the proprieties of that relation which subsists between a dependent family and their earthly benefactor, can assign the proprieties of that relation which subsists between our whole species and their heavenly Benefactor. For this purpose he has no new ethics to learn; and all that he requires to know are the facts or the objects of

there is a Jupiter that there must be a Georgium Sidus; and it requires an additional and independent act of observation to ascertain the existence of the latter. These informational truths, as they may be termed, form the proper objects of the Inductive Philosophy; whereas the truths of instruction are come at, not by separate observations, but by development and deduction from certain primary and comprehensive propositions which virtually contain them; but in which they lie wrapped and uneduced, till, by the processes whether of moral or mathematical reasoning, they are brought out in their own distinct individuality to view. And thus it is, that though it needs a new observation to tell us of that before unknown and existent object the Georgium Sidus—it needs not a new mathematics, to tell either the period of its revolution or the form of its orbit. Thus too though it be by an altogether new information that we come to know of the existent Being Jesus Christ; it is not by a new ethics that we came to acknowledge the services which we owe, or the reverence and gratitude which of right belong to Him.

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this higher relationship—to make the ethics which he already has as available in that Moral Philosophy whose field is the heaven above, as he has already made them in that Moral Philosophy whose field is the earth below.

22. The celestial physics form a more transcendental theme than the terrestrial. But this character of the more transcendental lies only in the facts, and not at all in the mathematics. And so the celestial in Moral Philosophy is a more transcendental theme than the terrestrial—but this too lies only in the facts, and not at all in the ethics. To obtain the facts and data of the former science, a new and peculiar mode of discovery was struck out. The telescope was invented. Many of the objects were beyond the reach of our natural vision; and nature was provided with an assistance—else there had been much of the celestial physics that would have remained for ever unknown. The same may, perhaps, hold of the celestial ethics also. Perhaps, there are many of its data that never could have been ascertained but by a peculiar mode of discovery. Perhaps the unaided faculties of man were incompetent to the task—and what the telescope hath done for us in respect of the material heavens, a living messenger may have done for us in respect of their moral and spiritual economy. It is a very wide transition when we pass from those distances in a terrestrial survey which can be measured by the chain, or at the farther extremities of which we can descry some floating signal that has been erected by human hands—when we pass from these through the mighty voids of im-

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mensity; and across that interval which separates the rolling worlds from each other, can now by the aid of the telescope look on moons and planets that eye had not seen, nor ear heard of, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive. And it is also a wide transition when we pass from the terrestrial to the celestial objects of Moral Philosophy—from the living society around us, to the Great Unseen who is above us; and of whom perhaps we could not have known save by the voice of a messenger from the pavilion of his special residence, who in reference to the celestial ethics, hath done what the telescope hath done in reference to the celestial mechanics, hath brought out from the obscurity in which for ages they had lain, objects of which the world was before unconscious; but to which when made known she is already furnished with a morality by which she can respond to them—even as when the new facts of astronomy were presented to her view, she already had the mathematics by which she could draw from them the just and important applications. The telescope gave her no geometry, though it gave her the data of many a geometrical exercise. And thus it is that a teacher from heaven, even though he should confine himself to the revelation of such facts and objects as had been before wrapt from human eye in the depths of their own mysteriousness—though he should simply lift the veil from that which was before unseen; or by the notices that he brought with him from the Upper Sanctuary, should bring forward into view a spiritual landscape, which by its remoteness, was

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dim at least, if not altogether invisible—though he should not be the expounder of any new morality at all, might be the expounder of facts that would meet and call forth a doctrine, or a previous discernment of morality, which had been already in the world.

23. And thus as the movement from the terrestrial to the celestial, is in Natural, so is it also in Moral Philosophy. By this movement we look at other things, and perhaps do so by other instruments of vision. In the latter, more particularly, instead of our fellow men, with whom we can hold immediate converse by the organs of sense, the great object is a Being whom no man hath seen at any time; but whom we either see by reflection from the mirror of His own workmanship, or see by revelation brought down to our earthly dwelling-places through a direct embassy from heaven.

24. And if on earth gratitude to a human benefactor is not unknown, and it be the universal sense of the species that there is virtue in the emotion—if truth, and goodness, and purity, when seen in a fellow mortal, draw an homage from the heart of every observer—if within the bounds of our world, the obligations of honour and humanity, and justice, are felt among those who live upon it; then let a new object be set forth to us from heaven, or perhaps an object seen but darkly before and now set forth in brighter manifestation—let Him be made known as the God whose hands did frame and fashion us, and whose right hand upholds us continually—let some new light be thrown upon His character and ways; some new and before unheard

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demonstration given of a holiness that can descend to no compromise with sin, and yet of a love that by all the sin of His creatures is unquenchable—let Him now stand out in the lustre of His high attributes, with each shedding a glory upon the other, yet mercy rejoicing over them all—let this Being, at once so lovely and so venerable, be expounded to our view, as the Father of the human family, and as sending abroad upon that world which He hath so plenteously adorned, a voice of general invitation, that his wandering children might again return to his forgiveness, and He again be securely seated in the confidence and affection of them all—it needs not that there be superadded to our existing Ethics, some new principle, in order that we may be qualified to meet this new revelation which is addressed to us. From the nature of man as he is already constituted, there might go back a moral echo to Him who thus speaketh to them from heaven; and they might only need to look upon the now manifested Deity, that their hearts may feel the love, or their consciences may attest the obedience which are due to Him.

25. And there is nought to baffle our ethics in the infinity of God, or in the distance at which He stands from us. Only grant Him to be our benefactor and our owner; and on this relation alone do we confidently found our obligations, both of gratitude and of service. Just as there is nothing, either in the mighty distance or overbearing magnitude of the sun, that baffles our mathematics. The magnitude of quantity does not affect the relations of quantity. It only gives a larger result

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to the calculation. And the same is true of the moral relations. Though the being who is the object of them, be exalted to the uttermost—though the beneficence which he has rendered outweigh indefinitely all that ever was conferred upon us by our fellow-men, there is nothing in this to disturb the conclusion that we owe him a return. It only enhances the conclusion. It only swells proportionally the amount of the return—and, instead of some partial offering, it points to the dedication of all our powers, and the consecration of all our habits, as the alone adequate expressions of our loyalty. In ascending from the terrestrial to the celestial ethics, we come in view of more elevated gifts, and a more elevated giver—but the relation between the two elements, of goodwill on the one hand, and of gratitude on the other, subsists as before—and the only effect of this ascent upon the morality of the question, is, that we are led thereby to infer the obligation of a still more sacred regard, of a still more duteous and devoted obedience.

26. Observation may have been the original source of all our mathematics. My acquiescence in the axioms of Euclid may have been the fruit of that intercourse which I have had with the external world by means of my senses; and but for the exercise of the eye or of the feelings on visible or tangible objects, I might never have obtained the conception of lines, or of figures bounded by lines. This may be true; and yet it is not less true that every essential or elementary idea of the mathematics may be acquired in early life, and with a very limited range of observation; and that we do not

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need to widen or extend this range—nay, that without the aid of one additional fact or experience, it is possible for the spirit of man to pass onward from the first principles of the science, and traverse all the fields both of geometry and analysis that have yet been explored. More particularly—with that little of observation, which for aught we know might have been necessary ere we could conceive aright of one triangle—with that, and no more, might we master the many thousand properties of each individual in that infinity of triangles that could be furnished by the points innumerable of space—and so, while passing from one truth to another in the little diagram that is before me, I may in fact, and without one particle of more light being borrowed from observation, be storing up in my mind the truths of a high and distant astronomy. And, in like manner, observation it may be contended is the original source of all our ethics, though I should rather say that it supplied the occasional cause for the development of our ethical faculties. But in either way, I must perhaps have seen an exemplification of kindness from one being to another, ere I could understand that gratitude was the emotion which ought to be rendered back again. But after having once gotten my conception and my belief of the virtue of this peculiar relationship—this will serve me for all the cases of Beneficence that shall ever afterwards come within my knowledge. The moral will admit of as wide and as confident an application as the mathematical—and only grant me to have ethics enough for perceiving that when between two fellow-men

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there is good-will on the one side, there ought to be gratitude on the other—and then simply with the information that God exists, and that He is a God of kindness, the very ethics which told me what I owe to a beneficent neighbour also tells me what I owe to a beneficent Deity.

27. We may thus learn what is the precise ascent which we make, in passing from the terrestrial to the celestial in Moral Philosophy. Let us distinguish between the objects of the science and the ethics of the science—and take notice that these two things stand related to each other, as do the objects of Natural Philosophy to the mathematics of Natural Philosophy. It is well to understand that a revelation of new facts might of itself suffice for this transition from the lower to the higher department of the subject—and that we do not need to go in quest of new principles. We may perhaps feel relieved from the apprehension of some great and impracticable mystery in this progress—and, at all events, it is most desirable that we conceive aright what be the actual stepping-stones by which it is accomplished. In Natural Philosophy the revelations of the telescope have been super-added to the perceptions of the naked eye—and by this instrument what was before seen has been made more distinct, and there has been brought forth to notice what before was wholly invisible. Perhaps too in Moral Philosophy, a science which in its most comprehensive sense embraces all the discoverable relations of the moral world, some new and peculiar revelation hath been super-added to the powers and the perceptions of Nature—and by

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which, we both see brighter what before was seen but dimly, and there may have further been made known to us what to the unaided mind of man is wholly undiscoverable. But still they might mainly be the peculiar facts or peculiar data which constitute the peculiarities of the celestial and distinguish it from the terrestrial of Moral Philosophy. It is in the facts and not in the ethics that the peculiarity lies.

28. The question then is—"What are the facts, and how are they accredited?" We already have an ethics suited to all the objects that we actually know—and that could be adapted to more objects on the moment of their being proposed to us. By the mathematics now in our possession, we could assign orbits corresponding to every possible law of attraction in astronomy. There is only one such law ascertained by observation; and the mathematical result of it is—the elliptic course of every planet that is within the reach of our instruments. Could we be made to know of the fact, that there is a gravitation of another rate in distant places of the universe, we are already furnished with the mathematics that would assign the path and periodical velocity of all the projectiles which are under it. Should a new satellite of Jupiter be discovered, the mathematics are at hand by which to assign the path that he ought to follow—and, to extend this remark from the physical to the moral world, should I be authentically made sure of the fact that there is a mystic influence between some certain inhabitant of that planet and myself, that in his breast there is a sympathy towards me, and in his hands

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a power over me—that he hath an eye upon all my movements, and by the charm of some talisman in his possession, can read all the feelings and fluctuations of my bosom—that, withal, he is my watchful and unwearied friend, and that every opportune suggestion, whether of comfort in distress or of counsel in the midst of my perplexities, is but the secret whisper of his voice—this were a fact utterly beyond the range of all our present experience, yet if only ascertained to be a fact not beyond the range of our present and existing ethics—and the gratitude I should owe to this beneficent though unseen guardian of my walk is as sure a dictate of our known and established morality, as is the gratitude that I owe to the nurse who tended my infancy, or to the patron who led me step by step along the bright prosperity of my manhood.

29. To ascertain then whether there be indeed a celestial ethics we have to go in quest of facts, and not of principles. We have no new system of morality to devise. There are present capacities of moral judgment and emotion within our heart; and for the development of which the world that is immediately around us is crowded with the objects to which they respond. The question is, whether there are not such objects also out of our world—and which when so addrest to our understanding that we perceive their reality, do not furthermore so address our sense of duty, as to convince us of a something which we ought to feel, or of a something which we ought to do.

30. We are aware, that along with the total degeneracy of man, there has been a total darkness

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ascribed to him; but we feel quite assured that in the vagueness and vehemence wherewith this charge has been preferred, the distinction between the objects and the ethics of Theology has not been enough adverted to. There is no such blindness in respect to moral distinctions that there is in respect to objects placed beyond the domain of observation, and holding substantive existence in a spiritual and unseen world. It is true that there is diversity of moral sentiment among men—and that, along with the general recognition of one and the same morals in the various ages and countries of the world, there have been certain special and important modifications. These have so far been well accounted for by Dr. Thomas Brown in one of his Lectures upon this subject—and what he has said on the effect of passion in so blinding for a time the mind that is under its influence as to obscure its perceptions of moral truth, may apply to whole generations of men unbridled in revenge or immersed in the depths of sensuality. Even the worst of these, however, will pronounce aright on the great majority of ethical questions—and should the power of profligacy or passion be from any cause suspended, if solemnized or arrested by the revelation of new objects from heaven, or (even without the intervention of aught so striking as this) if but withdrawn for a season from those influences which darken the understanding only because they deprave the affections, it is wonderful with how much truth of sentiment virtue is appreciated and the homage to virtue is felt. A thousand evidences of this could be extracted, not from the light and

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licentious, but certainly from the grave and didactic authorship both of Greece and Rome. And while beyond the limits of Christendom, all those peculiar revelations of the Gospel which relate either to past events or to existent objects are almost wholly unknown—we are persuaded that bosoms may be found which would do the homage of acknowledgment at least, if not of obedience, to its truth and its purity and its kindness and its generous self-devotion all the world over *

31. On this distinction between the objects and the ethics of Theology we should not have expatiated so long had we not been persuaded of the important uses to which it may be turned in estimating the legitimacy and the weight of various sorts of evidence for the truth of religion; and, more especially, in helping us to mark the respective provinces which belong to the light of nature and the light of revelation. We sometimes hear of the application of the Baconian Philosophy to the Christian argument; and it is our belief that this Philosophy so revered in modern times, and to which the experimental science of our day stands indebted for its present stability and gigantic elevation, does admit of most wholesome and beneficial application to the question between

* It is thus, that there is a pervading error in Leland's book on the Necessity of Revelation. There is not one trace, from beginning to end of it, of that discrimination which we have now been urging—nor do we remark in it any difference at all between the ignorance which springs from moral perversity and that which springs from mere intellectual deficiency. It is a book, however, that is worthy of perusal, though more for the exceeding fulness of its learned information, than for its just or enlightened principles.

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infidels and believers. But then we must so discriminate as to assign those places in the controversy where the Philosophy of Bacon is, and those where it is not applicable. It is of paramount authority on the question of facts or objects. On the question of ethics again, it is not more admissible than on the question of mathematics. And by thus confining it within its appropriate limits, we not only make a sounder application of it—but an application of it that we shall find to be greatly more serviceable to the cause.

32. Our first inference from this argument is, that even though the objects of Theology lay under total obscuration from our species—though a screen utterly impervious were placed between the mental eye of us creatures here below, and those invisible beings by whom heaven is occupied—still we might have an ethics in reserve, which on the screen being in any way withdrawn, will justly and vividly respond to the objects that are on the other side of it. There might be a mathematics without Astronomy, but of which instant application can be made, on the existent objects of Astronomy being unveiled. And there may be a morals without Theology, that, on the simple presentation of its objects, would at once recognise the duteous regards and proprieties which belong to them. We often hear, in the general, of the darkness of nature. But a darkness in regard to the ethics might not be at all in the same proportion or degree as a darkness in regard to the objects of Theology. We can imagine the latter to be a total darkness, while the former is only a twilight

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obscurity; or may even but need a revelation of the appropriate facts to be excited into full illumination. There may be moral light along with the ignorance of all supernal objects, in which case there can be no supernal application. But yet, in reference to the near and palpable and besetting objects of a sublunary scene, this same light might be of most useful avail in the business of human society. It is thus that we understand the Apostle when speaking of the work of the law being written in the hearts of the Gentiles, and of their being a law unto themselves. It at least furnished as much light to the conscience as that they could accuse or else excuse each other. In this passage he concedes to nature the knowledge, if not of the objects of Theology at least of the ethics. There might need perhaps to be a revelation ere any moral aspiration can be felt towards God—but without such a revelation, and without any regard being had to a God, there might be a reciprocal play of the moral feelings among men, a standard of equity and moral judgment, a common principle of reference alike indicated in their expressions of mutual esteem and mutual recrimination.

33. This, we think, should be quite obvious to those who are at all acquainted with the literature and history of ancient times. It is true that ere all the phenomena even of pagan conscience and sensibility can be explained, we must admit the knowledge, or at least the imagination of certain objects in Theology. But it is also true that apart from Theology altogether, with no other objects in the view of the mind than those which are supplied

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within the limits of our visible world and by the fellows of our species, there was a general sense of the right and the wrong—an occasional exemplification of high and heroic virtue with the plaudits of its accompanying admiration on the one hand—or, along with execrable villany, the prompt indignancy of human hearts, and execration of human tongues upon the other. We are not pleading for the practical strength of morality in those days,—though we might quote the self-devotion of Regulus, the continence of Scipio, and other noble sacrifices at the shrine of principle or patriotism. It is enough for our object which is to prove, not the power of morality, but merely the sense and recognition of it—that the nobility of these instances was felt, that the homage of public acclamation was rendered to them, that historians eulogized and poets sung the honours of illustrious virtue. We are not contending for such a moral nature as could achieve the practice, but for such a moral nature as could discern the principles of righteousness. In short there was a natural ethics among men, a capacity both of feeling and of perceiving the moral distinction between good and evil. The works of Horace and Juvenal and above all of Cicero abundantly attest this—nor are we aware of aught more splendid and even importantly true in the whole authorship of Moral Science than the following passage from the last of these writers. "Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna; quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat; quæ tamen neque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos

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jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi, nec abrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet neque tota abrogari potest. Nec vero per senatum, aut per populum, solvi hac lege possumus, neque est quærendus explanator aut interpres ejus alius. Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis—alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex et sempiterna, et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister, et Imperator omnium Deus. Ille legis hujus inventor, discepator, lator; cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis aspernabitur; atque hoc ipso, luet maximas pœnas, etiam si cætera supplicia quæ effugerit." Such is the testimony of a heathen to the law within the breast—and armed too with such power of enforcement, that, apart from the retributions of a reigning and a living judge, man cannot offer violation to its authority without at the same time suffering the greatest of all penalties in the violence which he thereby offers to his own nature.

34. But though we have thus separated between the Ontology and the Deontology of the question, between man's knowledge of existences and his knowledge of duties, between the light by which he views the being of a God and the light by which he views the services and affections that we owe to him—let it not be imagined that in conceding to nature the faculty of perceiving virtue, we concede to her such a possession of virtue, as at all to mitigate that charge of total and unexcepted depravity which the Scriptures have preferred against her. And neither let it be imagined that we even accredit

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her with such an unclouded perception of Ethics, as to leave nothing for revelation to do, but to superadd the knowledge of objects—so that on the simple information of what is truth, we could instantly and decisively follow it up with the conclusion of what is duty. We believe that Christianity not only addresses to the mind of her disciples objects which were before unknown, but quickens and enlightens them in the sense of what is right and wrong—making their moral discernment more clear, and their moral sensibility more tender.* But remember that Christianity herself presupposes this moral sense in nature—not however so as to alleviate the imputation of nature's worthlessness, but really and in effect to enhance it. Had nature been endowed with no such sense, all responsibility would have been taken away from her. Where there is no law there is no transgression; and it is just because men in all ages and in all countries are a law unto themselves, that the sweeping condemnation of Scripture can be carried universally round among the sons and daughters of our species.

35. This distinction in fact between the ethics and the objects of Theology will help us to defend aright the great Bible position of the depravity of our nature. It will lead us to perceive that there may be a morality without godliness, even as there may be a mathematics without astronomy. If we make proper discrimination we shall acknowledge how possible it is that there may be integrity and humanity in our doings with each other—while the

* This subject will fall to be more thoroughly discussed in a Chapter on the Internal Existence of Christianity.

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great unseen Being with whom we have most emphatically to do, is forgotten and disowned by us. We shall at length understand how along with the play and reciprocation of many terrestrial moralities in our lower world—we may be dead, and just from our heedlessness of the objects, to all those celestial moralities by which we are fitted for a higher and a better world. We shall cease from a treacherous complacency in the generosity or uprightness of nature; and no longer be deceived, by the existence of social virtue upon earth, into the imagination of our most distant claim to that heaven, from the elevation and the sacredness of which all the children of humanity have so immeasurably fallen.

36. So far from the degree of natural light which we have contended for being any extenuation of human depravity, it forms the very argument on which the Apostle concluded that all, both Jews and Gentiles, were under sin. His inference from the universal possession of a conscience among men is, "so that they are without excuse." It is not because they are blind that they are chargeable—but it is because they to a certain extent see that therefore their sin remaineth with them. We indeed think that the view which we have given may be turned to the defence of Orthodoxy, when the light of a man's conscience and the natural virtues of his life are pled in mitigation of that deep and desperate wickedness which is ascribed to him in the Bible. For it suggests this reply—There may be a mathematics without astronomy—there may be an Ethics without Theology. Even though the

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phenomena of the visible heavens are within the reach of human observation—yet, if we will not study them, we may still have a terrestrial geometry; but a celestial we altogether want, nay have wilfully put away from us. And so also, we may be capable of certain guesses and discoveries respecting God—yet, if we will not prosecute them, we may still have a terrestrial morals, and yet be in a state of practical atheism. The face of human society may occasionally brighten with the patriotism and the generosity and the honour which reciprocate from one to another amongst the members of the human family—and yet all may be immersed in deepest unconcern about their common Father who is in heaven—all may be living without God in the world.

CHAPTER II.

On the Duty which is laid upon Men by the Probability or even the Imagination of a God.

1. We have already seen that even though the objects of Theology lay under total obscurity, there might be a distinct and vigorous play of the Ethics notwithstanding—kept in actual exercise among those objects which are seen and terrestrial, and in readiness for eventual exercise on the revelation of unseen and celestial objects. This, however, does not accurately represent the real state of nature—for in no age or country of the world, we believe,

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did the objects of Theology lie hidden under an entire and unqualified darkness. There is, in reference to them, a sort of twilight glimmering, more or less, among all nations—and the question is, what sort of regimen or responsibility may that man be said to lie under, whose sole guidance in Theology is that which a very indistinct view of its objects, though with certainly a more distinct sense of its ethics, may suggest?

2. This brings us to the consideration of the duty laid upon men by the probability or even the imagination of a God.

3. It must now be abundantly obvious, that along with nature's discernment of the ethics, she may labour at the same time under a comparative blindness as to the objects of Theological Science. On the hypothesis of an actually existent God, there may be an urgent sense in human consciences of the gratitude and the obedience which belong to him. But still while this ethical apprehension may be clear and vivid, there may be either a bright or a dull conviction in regard to the truth of the hypothesis itself. We should here distinguish the things which be distinct from each other; and carefully note that, along with a just discernment of the proprieties which belong to certain moral relations, the question may still be unresolved, whether these relations be in truth exemplified by any real and living beings in the universe. What is right under certain moral relations, supposing them to be occupied, is one consideration. What exists in nature or in the universe to occupy these relations is another. It does not follow that though

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nature should be able to pronounce clearly and confidently on the first of these topics—she can therefore pronounce alike confidently on the second of them. The two investigations are conducted on different principles; and the two respective sorts of evidence upon which they proceed are just as different, as is the light of a mathematical demonstration from that light of observation by which we apprehend a fact or an object in Natural Philosophy. We have already conceded to nature the possession of that moral light by which she can to a certain, and we think to a very considerable extent, take accurate cognizance of the ethics of our science. And we have now to inquire in how far she is competent to her own guidance in seeking after the objects of the science.

4. The main object of Theology is God.

5. Going back then to the very earliest of our mental conceptions on this subject, we advert first to the distinction in point of real and logical import, between unbelief and disbelief. There being no ground for affirming that there is a God is a different proposition, from there being ground for affirming that there is no God. The former we apprehend, to be the furthest amount of the atheistical verdict on the question of a God. The atheist does not labour to demonstrate that there is no God. But he labours to demonstrate that there is no adequate proof of there being one. He does not positively affirm the position, that God is not; but he affirms the lack of evidence for the position, that God is. Judging from the tendency and effect of his arguments, an atheist does not appear posi-

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tively to refuse that a God may be—but he insists that He has not discovered Himself, whether by the utterance of His voice in audible revelation or by the impress of His hand upon visible nature. His verdict on the doctrine of a God is only that it is not proven. It is not that it is disproven. He is but an Atheist. He is not an Antitheist.

6. Now there is one consideration, which affords the inquirer a singularly clear and commanding position, at the outset of this great question. It is this. We cannot, without a glaring contravention to all the principles of the experimental philosophy, recede to a further distance from the doctrine of a God, than to the position of simple atheism. We do not need to take our departure from any point further back than this, in the region of antitheism; for that region cannot possibly be entered by us but by an act of tremendous presumption, which it were premature to denounce as impious, but which we have the authority of all modern science for denouncing as unphilosophical. We can figure a rigidly Baconian mind, of a cast so slow and cautious and hesitating, as to demand more of proof ere it gave its conviction to the doctrine that there was absolutely and certainly a God. But, in virtue of these very attributes, would it, if a sincere and consistent mind, be at least equally slow in giving its conviction to the doctrine that there was absolutely and certainly not a God. Such a mind would be in a state neither for assertion nor for denial upon this subject. It would settle in ignorance or unbelief which is quite another thing from disbelief. The

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met with one manifestation or one movement of a presiding God. For man not to know of a God, he has only to sink beneath the level of our common nature. But to deny him, he must be a God himself. He must arrogate the ubiquity and omniscience of the Godhead.*

8. It affords a firm outset to this investigation, that we cannot recede a greater way from the doctrine to be investigated, than to the simple point of ignorance or unbelief. We cannot, without making inroad on the soundest principles of evidence, move one step back from this, to the region of disbelief. We can figure an inquirer taking up his position in midway atheism. But he cannot, without defiance to the whole principle and philosophy of evidence, make aggression thence on the side of antitheism. There is a clear intellectual

* This idea has been powerfully rendered by Foster in the following passage extracted from one of his essays:—

"The wonder turns on the great process, by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that can know there is no God. What ages and what lights are requisite for this attainment? This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the Universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not absolutely know every agent in the Universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know every thing that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus unless he knows all things, that is, precludes another Deity by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects, does not exist."

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principle, which forbids his proceeding in that direction; and there is another principle equally clear, though not an intellectual but a moral one, which urges him, if not to move, at least to look in the opposite direction. We are not asking him, situated where he is, to believe in God. For the time being, we as little expect a friendly as we desire a hostile decision upon the question. Our only demand for the present is, that he shall entertain the question. And to enforce the demand, we think that an effective appeal might be made to his own moral nature. We suppose him still to be an atheist, but no more than an atheist—for, in all right Baconian logic, the very farthest remove from theism, at which he or any man can be placed by the lack of evidence for a God, is at the point of simple neutrality. We might well assume this point, as the utmost possible extreme of alienation from the doctrine of a Creator, to which the mind of a creature can in any circumstances be legitimately carried. We cannot move from it, in the direction towards antitheism, without violence to all that is just in philosophy; and we might therefore commence with inquiring, whether, in this lowest state of information and proof upon the question, there can be any thing assigned, which should lead us to move, or at least to look in the opposite direction.

9. In the utter destitution, for the present, of any argument, or even semblance of argument, that a God is—there is, perhaps, a certain duteous movement which the mind ought to take, on the bare suggestion that a God may be. An object

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in moral science may be wholly unseen, while the Ethics connected with that object may not be wholly unfelt. The certainty of an actual God binds over to certain distinct and most undoubted proprieties. But so also may the imagination of a possible God —in which case, the very idea of a God, even in its most hypothetical form, might lay a responsibility, even upon atheists.

10. Here then is one palpable use for the distinction between the ethics and the objects of Theology, or between the Deontology and Ontology of it. We may have a moral nature for the one, even when in circumstances of utter blindness to the other. The mere conception of the objects is enough to set the ethics agoing. Though in the dark as to the question whether a God exists, yet on the bare imagination of a God, we are not at all in the dark as to the question of the gratitude and the obedience which are due to Him. There is a moral light in the midst of intellectual darkness— an ethics that waits only for the presentation of the objects. The very idea of a God, even in its most hypothetical form, will bring along with it an instant sense and recognition of the moralities and duties that would be owing to Him. Should an actual God be revealed, we clearly feel that there is a something which we ought to be and to do in regard to Him. But more than this; should a possible God be imagined, there is a something not only which we feel that we ought, but a something which we actually ought to do or to be, in consequence of our being visited by such an imagination. The thought of a God not only suggests what would be our in-

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cumbent obligations, did such a Being become obvious to our convictions—but the thought of a God suggests what are the incumbent obligations which commence with the thought itself, and are anterior even to the earliest dawn of evidence for a Deity. We hold that there are such obligations, and our purpose now is, if possible, to ascertain them.

11. To make this palpable, we might imagine a family suffering under extreme destitution, and translated all at once into sufficiency or affluence by an anonymous donation. Had the benefactor been known, the gratitude that were due to him becomes abundantly obvious; and in the estimation of every conscience, nothing could exceed the turpitude of him, who should regale himself on the bounties wherewith he had been enriched, and yet pass unheedingly by the giver of them all. Yet does not a proportion of this very guilt rest upon him, who knows not the hand that relieved him, yet cares not to inquire? It does not exonerate him from the burden of all obligation that he knows not the hand which sustains him. He incurs a guilt, if he do not want to know. It is enough to convict him of a great moral delinquency, if he have gladly seized upon the liberalities which were brought in secret to his door, yet seeks not after the quarter whence they have come—willing that the hand of the dispenser should remain for ever unknown, and not wanting any such disclosures as would lay a distinct claim or obligation upon himself. He altogether lives by the bounty of another; yet would rather continue to live without the burden of those

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services or acknowledgments that are due to him. His ignorance of the benefactor might alleviate the charge of ingratitude; but it plainly awakens the charge again, if he choose to remain in ignorance, and would shun the information that might dispel it. In reference then to this still undiscovered patron of his family, it is possible for him to evince ingratitude; to make full exhibition of a nature that is unmoved by kindness and withholds the moral responses which are due to it, that can riot with utmost selfishness and satisfaction upon the gifts while in total indifference about the giver—an indifference which might be quite as clearly and characteristically shown, by the man who seeks not after his unknown friend, as by the man who slights him after that he has found him.

12. And further this ingratitude admits of degrees. It may exist even in a state of total uncertainty as to the object of it; and without the smallest clue to the discovery of him. But should some such clue be put into his hand, and he forbear the prosecution of it—this would enhance the ingratitude. It were an aggravation of his baseness if there cast up some opening to a discovery, and he declined to follow it—if the probability fell in his way that might have guided him to the unseen hand which had been stretched forth in his behalf, and he shut his eyes against it—if he, satisfied with the bounty, were not merely content to live without the slightest notice of the benefactor, but lived in utter disregard of every notice that transpired upon the subject—loving the darkness rather than the light upon this question; and better pleased to

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grovel in the enjoyment of the gifts without the burden of any gratitude to that giver whom he rather wills to abide in secrecy. There is most palpable delinquency of spirit in all this; and it would become still more evident, should he distinctly refuse the calls that were brought within his hearing to prosecute an inquiry. The grateful man would not do this. He would be restless under the ignorance of him to whom he owed the preservation of his family. He would feel the uneasiness of a heart whose most urgent desire was left without its object. It is thus that anterior to the knowledge of the giver, and far anterior to the full certainty of him—the moralities which spring from the obligation of his gifts might come into play. Even in this early stage, there is, in reference to him who is yet unknown, a right and a wrong—and there might be evinced either the worth of a grateful disposition, or there be incurred the guilt of its opposite. Under a discipline of penalties and rewards for the encouragement of virtue, one man might be honoured for the becoming sensibilities of his heart to one whom he never saw; and another be held responsible for his conduct to him of whom he utterly was ignorant.

13. It may thus be made to appear, that there is an ethics connected with theology, which may come into play, anterior to the clear view of any of its objects. More especially, we do not need to be sure of God, ere we ought to have certain feelings, or at least certain aspirations towards him. For this purpose we do not need, fully and absolutely to believe that God is. It is enough

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that our minds cannot fully and absolutely acquiesce in the position that God is not. To be fit subjects for our present argument, we do not need to have explored that territory of nature which is within our reach; and thence gathered, in the traces of a designer's hand the positive conclusion that there is a God. It is enough if we have not traversed, throughout all its directions and in all its extent, the sphere of immensity; and if we have not scaled the mysterious altitudes of the eternity that is past; nor, after having there searched for a divinity in vain, have come at length to the positive and the peremptory conclusion, that there is not a God. In a word, it is quite enough that man is barely a finite creature, who has not yet put forth his faculties on the question whether God is; neither has yet so ranged over all space and all time, as definitely to have ascertained that God is not—but with whom though in ignorance of all proof, it still remains a possibility that God may be.

14. Now to this condition there attaches a most clear and incumbent morality. It is to go in quest of that unseen benefactor, who for aught I know, has ushered me into existence, and spread so glorious a panorama around me. It is to probe the secret of my being and my birth; and, if possible, to make discovery whether it was indeed the hand of a benefactor, that brought me forth from the chambers of nonentity, and gave me place and entertainment in that glowing territory, which is lighted up with the hopes and the happiness of living men. It is thus that the very conception of a God throws a responsibility after it; and that

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duty, solemn and imperative duty, stands associated with the thought of a possible deity, as well as with the sight of a present deity, standing in full manifestation before us. Even anterior to all knowledge of God, or when that knowledge is in embryo, there is both a path of irreligion and a path of piety; and that law which denounces the one and gives to the other an approving testimony, may find in him who is still in utter darkness about his origin and his end, a fit subject for the retributions which she deals in. He cannot be said to have borne disregard to the will of that God, whom he has found. But his is the guilt of impiety, in that he has borne disregard to the knowledge of that God, whom he was bound by every tie of gratitude to seek after—a duty not founded on the proofs that may be exhibited for the being of a God, but a duty to which even the most slight and slender of presumptions should give rise. And who can deny that, antecedent to all close and careful examination of the proofs, there are at least many presumptions in behalf of a God, to meet the eye of every observer? Is there any so hardy as to deny, that the curious workmanship of his frame *may* have had a designer and an architect; that the ten thousand independent circumstances which must be united ere he can have a moment's ease, and the failure of any one of which would be agony, may not have met at random, but that there may be a skilful and unseen hand to have put them together into one wondrous concurrence, and that never ceases to uphold it; that there may be a real and a living artist, whose fingers did frame the economy of actual

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things, and who hath so marvellously suited all that is around us to our senses and our powers of gratification? Without affirming aught which is positive, surely the air that we breathe, and the beautiful light in which we expatiate, these elements of sight and sound so exquisitely fitted to the organs of the human frame-work, *may* have been provided by one who did benevolently consult in them our special accommodation. The graces innumerable that lie widely spread over the face of our world, the glorious concave of heaven that is placed over us, the grateful variety of seasons that like Nature's shifting panorama ever brings new entertainment and delight to the eye of spectators—these may, for aught we know, be the emanations of a creative mind, that originated our family and devised such a universe for their habitation. Regarding these, not as proofs, but in the humble light of presumptions for a God, they are truly enough to convict us of foulest ingratitude—if we go not forth in quest of a yet unknown, but at least possible or likely benefactor. They may not resolve the question of a God. But they bring the heaviest reproach on our listlessness to the question; and show that, anterior to our assured belief in his existence, there lies upon us a most imperious obligation to "stir ourselves up that we may lay hold of Him."

15. Such presumptions as these, if not so many demands on the belief of man, are at least so many demands upon his attention; and then, for aught he knows, the presumptions on which he ought to inquire, may be more and more enhanced, till they brighten into proofs which ought to convince him.

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The *prima facie* evidence for a God may not be enough to decide the question; but it should at least decide man to entertain the question. To think upon how slight a variation either in man or in external nature, the whole difference between physical enjoyment and the most acute and most appalling of physical agony may turn; to think how delicate the balance is, and yet how surely and steadfastly it is maintained, so as that the vast majority of creatures are not only upheld in comfort but often may be seen disporting themselves in the redundance of gaiety; to think of the pleasurable sensations wherewith every hour is enlivened, and how much the most frequent and familiar occasions of life are mixed up with happiness; to think of the food, and the recreation, and the study, and the society, and the business, each having an appropriate relish of its own, so as in fact to season with enjoyment the great bulk of our existence in the world; to think that, instead of living in the midst of grievous and incessant annoyance to all our faculties, we should have awoke upon a world that so harmonized with the various senses of man, and both gave forth such music to his ear, and to his eye such manifold loveliness; to think of all these palpable and most precious adaptations, and yet to care not, whether in this wide universe there exists a being who has had any hand in them; to riot and regale oneself to the uttermost in the midst of all this profusion, and yet to send not one wishful inquiry after that Benevolence which for aught we know may have laid it at our feet—this, however shaded from our view the object of the question

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may be, is, from its very commencement, a clear outrage against its ethical proprieties. If that veil of dim transparency, which hides the Deity from our immediate perceptions, were lifted up; and we should then spurn from us the manifested God—this were direct and glaring impiety. But anterior to the lifting of that veil, there may be impiety. It is impiety to be so immersed as we are, in the busy objects and gratifications of life; and yet to care not whether there be a great and a good spirit by whose kindness it is that life is upholden. It needs not that this great spirit should reveal Himself in characters that force our attention to Him, ere the guilt of our impiety has begun. But ours is the guilt of impiety, in not lifting our attention towards God, in not seeking after Him if haply we may find Him.

16. Man is not to blame, if an atheist, because of the want of proof. But he is to blame, if an atheist, because he has shut his eyes. He is not to blame, that the evidence for a God has not been seen by him, if no such evidence there were within the field of his observation. But he is to blame, if the evidence have not been seen, because he turned away his attention from it. That the question of a God may lie unresolved in his mind, all he has to do, is to refuse a hearing to the question. He may abide without the conviction of a God, if he so choose. But this his choice is matter of condemnation. To resist God after that He is known, is criminality towards Him; but to be satisfied that He should remain unknown, is like criminality towards Him. There is a moral perversity of

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spirit with him who is willing, in the midst of many objects of gratification, that there should not be one object of gratitude. It is thus that, even in the ignorance of God, there may be a responsibility towards God. The Discerner of the heart sees, whether, for the blessings innumerable wherewith He has strewed the path of every man, He be treated, like the unknown benefactor who was diligently sought, or like the unknown benefactor who was never cared for. In respect, at least of desire after God, the same distinction of character may be observed between one man and another—whether God be wrapt in mystery, or stand forth in full development to our world. Even though a mantle of deepest obscurity lay over the question of His existence; this would not efface the distinction, between the piety on the one hand which laboured and aspired after Him; and the impiety upon the other which never missed the evidence that it did not care for, and so grovelled in the midst of its own sensuality and selfishness. The eye of a heavenly witness is upon all these varieties; and thus, whether it be darkness or whether it be dislike which hath caused a people to be ignorant of God, there is with him a clear principle of judgment, that He can extend even to the outfields of atheism.

17. It would appear then, that, however shaded from the view of man are the objects of Theology, as in virtue of his moral nature he can feel and recognise in some degree the ethics of Theology—even in this initial state of his mind on the question of a God, there is an impellent force upon the conscience, which he ought to obey, and which he

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incurs guilt by resisting. We do not speak of that light which irradiates the termination of the inquirer's path, but of that embryo or rudimental light which glimmers over the outset of it; which serves at least to indicate the commencement of his way; and which, for aught he knows, may brighten, as he advances onwards, to the blaze of a full and finished revelation. At no point of this progress, does "the trumpet give an uncertain sound," extending, if not to those who stand on the ground of antitheism, (which we have already pronounced upon and we trust proved to be madly irrational) —at least to those who stand on the ground of atheism, who, though strangers to the conviction, are certainly not strangers to the conception of a Deity. It is of the utmost practical importance, that even these are not beyond the jurisdiction of an obvious principle; and that a right obligatory call can be addressed to men so far back on the domain of irreligion and ignorance. It is deeply interesting to know, by what sort of moral force, even an atheist ought to be evoked from the fastness which he occupies—what are the notices, by responding to which, he should come forth with open eyes and a willing mind to this high investigation; and by resisting which, he will incur a demerit, whereof a clear moral cognizance might be taken, and whereon a righteous moral condemnation might be passed. The "fishers of men" should know the uttermost reach of their argument; and it is well to understand of religion, that, if she have truth and authority at all, there is a voice proceeding from her which might be universally

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heard—so that even the remotest families of earth, if not reclaimed by her, are thereby laid under sentence of righteous reprobation.

18. On this doctrine of the moral dynamics, which operate and are in force, even in our state of profoundest ignorance respecting God, there may be grounded three important applications.

19. The first is that all men, under all the possible varieties of illumination, may nevertheless be the fit subjects for a judicial cognizance—insomuch that when admitted to the universal account, the Discerner of the heart will be at no loss for a principle on which they all might be reckoned with —as, corresponding to a very dim perception of the objects of religion, there might still be as much in operation of the ethics of religion as might lay a distinct responsibility even on the most wild and untutored of nature's children. Within the whole compass of the human family there exists not one outcast tribe that might not be made the subjects of a moral reckoning at the bar of heaven's jurisprudence—even though no light from the upper sanctuary hath ever shone upon them; and neither hath any light of science or of civilization sprung up among themselves. In each untutored bosom there do exist the elements of a moral nature; and the peculiar character of each could be seen from the way in which it responded to the manifestation of a Deity. And though only visited by the thought or the suspicion of a Deity, the same thing still could be seen from the way in which these children of nature were affected by it. Each would give his own entertainment to the thought; and, in the

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longings of a vague and undefined earnestness that arose to heaven from the solitary wild, might there be evinced as strong an affinity for God and for godliness, as in those praises of an enlightened gratitude that ascend from the temples of Christendom. It is thus that the Searcher of the inner man will find out data for a reckoning among all the tribes of this world's population—and that nowhere on the face of our globe doth spiritual light glimmer so feebly as not to supply the materials of a coming judgment on one and all of the human family.

20. It is thus that even to the most remote and unlettered tribes, men are everywhere the fit subjects for a judgment-day. Their belief, scanty though it be, hath a correspondent morality which they may either observe or be deficient in, and so be reckoned with accordingly. They have few of the facts in Theology; and these may be seen too through the hazy medium of a dull and imperfect evidence, or perhaps have only been shadowed out to them by the power of imagination. Their theology may have arisen no higher than to the passing suggestion of a God—a mere surmise or rumination about an unseen spirit, who, tending all their footsteps, was their guardian and their guide through the dangers of the pathless wilderness, who provides all the sustenance which this earth can supply, and hath lighted up these heavens in all their glory. Now in this thought, fugitive though it be, in these uncertain glimpses whether of a truth or of a possibility, there is that, to which the elements of their moral nature might respond—so that to them, there is not the same

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exemption from all responsibility, which will be granted to the man who is sunk in hopeless idiotism, or to the infant of a day old. Even with the scanty materials of a heathen creed, a pure or a perverse morality might be grounded thereupon—whether, in those longings of a vague and undefined earnestness that arise from him who feels in his bosom an affinity for God and godliness; or, in the heedlessness of him, who, careless of an unknown benefactor, would have been alike careless, although He had stood revealed to his gaze, with as much light and evidence as is to be had in Christendom. These differences attest what man is, under the dark economy of Paganism; and so give token to what he would be, under the bright economy of a full and finished revelation. It is thus that the Searcher of the heart will find out data for a reckoning, even among the rudest of nature's children, or among those whose spiritual light glimmers most feebly—for faint and feeble though it be, it affords a test to the character of him whom it visits—whether he dismiss its suggestions with facility from his mind, or is arrested thereby into a grateful sense of reverence. Even the simple theology of the desert can supply the materials of a coming judgment—so that the Discerner of the inner man, able to tell who it is that morally acts and morally feels up to the light he has, or up to the objects that lie within his contemplation, will be at no loss for a principle, on which He might clearly and righteously try all the men of all the generations that be upon the face of the earth.

21. We read in the Epistle to the Romans of a

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day when God shall judge the secrets of men—both of the Jews who shall be judged by the written law, and of the Gentiles who have the work of the law written in their hearts, and are a law to themselves. We may now perhaps comprehend more distinctly how this may be. Though it be true that the more clearly we know God, the more closely does the obligation of godliness lie upon us—yet there might be none so removed from the knowledge of God as to stand released from all obligation. There is the sense of a Divinity in every mind; and correspondent to that sense, there is a morality that is either complied with by the will or rebelled against—so that under all the possible varieties of illumination and doctrine which obtain in various countries of the world, there might be exemplified either a religiousness or an impiety of character. The heavenly witness who is on high can discern in every instance—whether to the conception of a great invisible power that floats indistinctly in many a bosom, but is nowhere wholly obliterated, there be such duteous regards of the heart or such duteous conformities of the life as morality would dictate, and out of this question can be gathered materials for a cognizance and a reckoning with all. The Searcher of hearts knows how to found a clear and righteous judgment even on those moral phenomena that are given forth by men in the regions of grossest heathenism—and though the condemnation will fall lightest where the ignorance has been most profound, and at the same time involuntary; yet none we think of our species are so deeply immersed in

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blindness or fatuity about God, as that he might not be sisted at the bar of heaven's jurisprudence, and there meet with a clear principle of condemnation to rest upon him.

22. The second important bearing of this principle is on the subject of religious education. For what is true of a savage is true of a child. It may rightly feel the ethics of the relation between itself and God, before it rationally apprehends the object of this relation. Its moral may outrun its argumentative light. Long anterior to the possibility of any sound conviction as to the character or existence of a God, it may respond with sound and correct feeling to the mere conception of Him. We hold, that, on this principle, the practice of early, nay even of infantine religious education, may, in opposition to the invectives of Rousseau and others, be fully and philosophically vindicated. Even though the object should be illusory, still on this low supposition there is no moral deterioration incurred but the contrary by an education which calls forth a right exercise of the heart, even to an imaginary being. But should the object be real, then the advantage of that anticipative process by which it is addressed to the conception of the young, before it can be intelligently recognised by them, is, that though it do not at once enlighten them on the question of a God, it at least awakens them to the question. Though they are not yet capable of appreciating the proofs which decide the question, it is a great matter, that, long before they have come to this they can feel the moral propriety of giving it solemn and respectful entertain-

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ment. Anterior to a well-grounded belief in the objects of religion, there is a preparatory season of religious scholarship, commencing with childhood and reaching onward through successive stages in the growth of intellect—a very early and useful season of aspirations and inquiries prompted by a sense of duty even to the yet unknown God. Here it is, that the ethics of our science and the objects of our science stand most noticeably out from each other—for, at the very time that the objects are unknown, there is an impellent force upon the spirit, of a clear ethical dictate, enjoining us to acquire the knowledge of them.

23. And this early education can be vindicated not only on the score of principle, but also on the score of effect. Whether it properly illuminates or not, it at least prepares for those brighter means of illumination which are competent to a higher state of the understanding. If it do not rationally convince, it at least provides a responsibility, though not a security for that attention which goes before such a conviction. It does not consummate the process; but, in as far as the moral precedes the intellectual, it makes good the preliminary steps of the process—insomuch that, in every Christian land, the youth and the manhood are accountable for their belief, because accountable for their use or their neglect of that inquiry, by which the belief ought to have been determined. There is no individual so utterly a stranger to the name and the conception of a Divinity as to be without the scope of this obligation. They have all from their infancy heard of God. Many have been trained to

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think of Him, amidst a thousand associations of reverence. Some, under a roof of piety, have often lisped the prayers of early childhood to this unseen Being; and, in the oft repeated sound of morning and evening orisons, they have become familiar to His name. Even they who have grown up at random through the years of a neglected boyhood, are greatly within the limits of that responsibility for which we plead. They have at least the impression of a God. When utterance of Him is made in their hearing, they are not startled as if by the utterance of a thing unnoticed and unknown. They are fully possessed, if not with the certainty, at least with the idea, of a great eternal Sovereign whose kingdom is the universe, and on whose will all its processes are suspended. Whosoever may have escaped from the full and practical belief of such a Being, he most assuredly hath not escaped from the conception of Him. The very imprecations of profaneness may have taught it to him. The very Sabbaths he spends in riot and blasphemy at least remind him of a God. The worship-bell of the church he never enters, conveys to him, if not the truth at least an imagination of the truth. In all these ways and in many more beside, there is the sense of a God upon his spirit—and if such a power of evidence hath not been forced upon his understanding as to compel the assurance that God is—at least such intimations have been given, that he cannot possibly make his escape from the thought that a God may be. In spite of himself this thought will overtake him, and if it do not arrest him by a sense of obligation, it will leave

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guilt upon his soul. It might not make him a believer, but it ought to make him an inquirer—and in this indifference of his there is the very essence of sin—though it be against a God who is unknown.

24. And, thirdly, we may thus learn to appreciate the plea on which the irreligious of all classes in society would fain extenuate their heedlessness—from the homely peasant who alleges his want of scholarship, to the gay and dissipated voluptuary who, trenched in voluntary darkness, holds himself to be without the pale of a reckoning, because he demands a higher evidence for religion than has ever yet shone upon his understanding. This antecedency of the ethics, not to the conception, but at least to the belief of the objects, places them all within the jurisdiction of a principle—the violation of which brings guilt and danger in its train. Instead of waiting till the light of an overpowering manifestation shall descend upon their spirits, it is their part to lift up their attention to the light which is offered. It will not exempt them from blame that they have never found the truth which would have saved them—if their own consciences can tell that in good earnest they have never sought it. Their heedlessness about an unknown though possible God, is just the moral perversity that would make them heedless of a God who had been fully ascertained—and, rudely unsettled though they may deem their Theology to be, it may be enough to make them responsible for deepest seriousness about God; and if they want this seriousness, enough to convict them of most glaring impiety. This principle tells even at the

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outset of a minster's dealings with the most rustic congregations; and, all ignorant as they may be of the proofs by which religion is substantiated, there is still even in their untutored minds such an impression of probability, as if not sufficient to decide the question, should at least summon all their faculties to the respectful entertainment of it.

25. We may thus perceive what that is, on which a teacher of religion finds an introduction for his topic, even into the minds of people in the lowest state both of moral and intellectual debasement. They may have not that in them, at the outset of his ministrations, which can enable them to decide the question of a God; but they have at least that in them, which should summon their attention to it. They have at least such a sense of the divinity, as their own consciences will tell, should put them on the regards and the inquiries of moral earnestness. This is a clear principle which operates at the very commencement of a religious course; and causes the first transition, from the darkness and insensibility of alienated nature, to the feelings and attentions of seriousness. The truth is, that there is a certain rudimental theology every where, on which the lessons of a higher theology may be grafted—as much as to condemn, if not to awaken the apathy of nature. What we have already said of the relation in which the father of a starving household stands to the giver of an anonymous donation, holds true of the relation in which all men stand to the unseen or anonymous God. Though in a state of absolute darkness, and without one token or clue to a

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discovery, there is room for the exhibition of moral differences among men—for even then, all the elements of morality might be at work, and all the tests of moral propriety might be abundantly verified; and still more, after that certain likelihoods had arisen, or some hopeful opening had occurred for investigating the secret of a God. There is the utmost moral difference that can be imagined between the man who would gaze with intense scrutiny upon these likelihoods, and the man who either in heedlessness or aversion would turn his eyes from them; between the man who would seize upon such an opening and prosecute such an investigation to the uttermost, and the man who either retires or shrinks from the opportunity of a disclosure, that might burden him both with the sense and with the services of some mighty obligation.

26. And the same moral force which begins this inquiry, also continues and sustains it. If there be power in the very conception of a God to create and constitute the duty of seeking after Him, this power grows and gathers with every footstep of advancement in the high investigation. If the thought of a merely possible deity have rightfully awakened a sense of obligation within us to entertain the question; the view of a probable deity must enhance this feeling, and make the claim upon our attention still more urgent and imperative than at the first. Every new likelihood makes the call louder, and the challenge more incumbently binding than before. In proportion to the light we had attained, would be the criminality of resisting

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any further notices or manifestations of that mighty Being with whom we had so nearly and so emphatically to do. Under the impulse of a right principle, we should follow on to know God—till, after having done full justice both to our opportunities and our powers, we had made the most of all the available evidence that was within our reach, and possessed ourselves of all the knowledge that was accessible.

27. But we shall expatiate no longer on the popular and practical applications of this principle —all important though they be; and will only now advert to the distinction between the ethics and the objects of Theology, for the purpose of elucidating by a very obvious analogy the relation in which the Natural and the Christian Theology stand to each other.

28. And first, it is obvious that in virtue of our moral nature, such as it is, there might be a feeling of certain moral proprieties as appendant to certain relations between man and man without any recognition by the mind of God. Though the world were to be transported beyond the limits of the divine economy—though the Supreme were now to stamp a perpetuity upon its present laws both of physical and mental nature, and then to abandon it for ever—though He were to consign it to some distant and solitary place in a reign of atheism, only leaving untouched the outward accommodations by which man is now surrounded, and the internal mechanism which he carries in his bosom—let there be no difference but one, namely, that all sense of a ruling Divinity were expunged, but that with this

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exception all the processes of thought and imagination and feeling went on upon their old principles—still would there be a morality among men, a recognition of the difference between right and wrong, just as distinct and decided as a recognition of the difference between beauty and deformity. There would be nought in such a translation of the human family to this new state that could break up the alliance between a view of loveliness in scenery, and the tasteful admiration of it; or between a view of integrity in character and the approval of its worth or its rectitude. By the supposition that we now make, the taste is left entire—and it has only to be presented with the same objects that it may be similarly affected as before. And by the same supposition the moral nature is left entire—and it has only to be presented with the appropriate objects, that it may respond to them as it did before, and come forth with its wonted evolutions. The single difference is, that one object is withdrawn, that God henceforth is unheeded and unknown, that he is never present to the eye of the mind so as to call forth from the heart a sense of corresponding duteousness. But still in the utter absence of all thought and of all knowledge about God, there are other objects whereon with the human constitution unchanged the moral feeling and the moral faculty would find their appropriate exercise. There would still be the reciprocations of morality among men—the same relationship as before between injury and a sense of displeasure—between beneficence and a sense of gratitude—between a consciousness of guilt, towards a neighbour, if not

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towards God, between this consciousness and the pain of self-dissatisfaction—between the exposure of human villany or baseness upon the one hand and the outcries of public execration on the other. The voice of the inward monitor would still be heard. The voice of society whether in applause or condemnation would still be heard. Men would still continue to accuse or else to excuse each other. The whole system of our jurisprudence might remain as at present—and superadded to it, there would be a court of conscience and a court of public opinion, by which, even after the world had been desolated of all sense of God, a natural regimen of morality might still be upholden.

29. Let a mathematician retain his geometrical powers and perceptions entire; and though he should become an atheist, he will still apprehend a question of equality between one line and another. And let any one retain his moral powers and perceptions entire; and though he should become an atheist, he will still apprehend a question of equity between one man and another. Atheism does not hinder the resentment which he feels upon a provocation; neither does it hinder the instinctive sensibility which he feels at the sight of distress; neither does it hinder the quick and lively approval wherewith he regards an exhibition of virtue; nor yet the recoil of his adverse moral judgment with all its emotions of antipathy from some scene of perfidy or of violence. Though utterly broken loose from heaven, there would still be the same play of action and reaction upon earth. Both the obligation of a legal right, and the approbation of a moral rightness

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would continue to be felt—and as in the chamber of a man's own heart there would be a remorse upon the back of iniquity as before, and from the tribunal of society there would descend upon it a voice of rebuke as before—the obligations of morality would still have a meaning; and apart from the thought of God, there would be a sense as well as an understanding of moral obligation.

30. With the access which the geometrician has at present to the orbs and the movements which be on high—his mathematics do avail him for the com putations of a sublime astronomy. Let this access be barred; and still his mathematics would avail him as before for all terrestrial positions and distances. And so with the access which either peasant or philosopher has to the knowledge of God, his morals do avail for pointing out the incumbent gratitude and the incumbent obedience. Let this access be somehow intercepted, let the face of the Divinity be mantled in thickest darkness, insomuch that the very conception of Him were banished from our world; and still would there remain a sublunary morals that would take cognizance of the sublunary relationships as before. The astronomer in the one case might sink down into a landed surveyor. The aspiring candidate for heaven, in the other case, might sink down into a mere citizen of earth—yet there would be a surviving mathematics and also a surviving morals. The distinction between the right and the wrong would no more be obliterated by such an interception of our view towards the upper sanctuary, than the distinction between the east and the west would be cancelled

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by the destruction of the telescope, and the disappearance of all its wondrous revelations from the memory of our species. The earth that we tread upon would still continue to be a platform for the display and exercise of the moral proprieties—and as it was in the age of Greece and Rome, the period of a distorted theology, so would it be now in the period of an utterly extinct theology—virtue would be felt in its rightness, and also be felt in the obligation of it.

31. When Sir Isaac Newton was first made to know of the Satellites of Jupiter, he had not an essentially new mathematics to learn that he might evolve the law of their movements. The only novelty lay in the facts, and not in the principles that he brought to bear upon them. The geometry which guided him along these celestial orbs was the very same by which he traced the path of a projectile on the surface of our own planet; and to obtain a just estimate of those mazy heavens that now were opened to his view, he had only to transfer the mathematics which he before had to another set of data. And it is the very same with the revelations of a higher moral, as with those of a higher physical economy. It is a revelation not of new principles, but of new objects addressed to our old principles. The very ethics that had been long in frequent and familiar exercise about the things within our knowledge, are available for such things as are now offered for the first time to our contemplation—even though our eye had not before seen, nor our ear heard, nor yet it had ever entered into our hearts to conceive of them. The

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very ethics that dictate our gratitude to an earthly benefactor, dictate also the transcending gratitude, the sublimer devotion that we owe to the benefactor who sitteth on high—just as the arithmetic which assigns the units of an earthly, is the same with that which assigns the millions of a distance that is heavenly. It is thus that the revelations of heaven meet with a law already written in the hearts of men upon earth—and so in the whole morality of that relationship which subsists between men and their Maker, do we meet with analogies to the morality of men who live without God in the world.

32. Thus there is a natural philosophy which, when conversant with earthly objects alone, may be denominated the Science of Terrestrial Physics. And in like manner there is a moral philosophy which, when conversant with earthly objects alone, as with the various beings who occupy this globe, may be denominated the Science of Terrestrial Ethics.

33. But even within the cognizance of man's natural eye, there are heavenly objects whose paths and movements can be traced by him; and so be made the subject of mathematical description and mathematical reasoning. When he lifts himself to the contemplation of them, he enters on the confines of a science distinct from the former, though comprehended with it under the general title of Natural Philosophy—even what may be called the science of the Celestial Physics. In as far as he prosecutes this science without the aid of instruments for the enlargement of his vision, he

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may be said to study the lessons of natural astronomy. There was such an astronomy prior to the invention of the telescope; and even still, the limits could be assigned between those truths or doctrines of the whole science of astronomy which lie within the ken of the natural eye, and those that lie without the ken of the natural eye, but within the ken of the telescope.

34. And so truly of moral philosophy. Within the natural eyesight of the mind, there may be clearly perceived—not alone those objects of the science which are placed immediately around us upon earth; but there may also be perceived, though dimly and hazily we allow, one heavenly object of the science. The light of nature reaches more or less a certain way into the region of celestial ethics; and so there is a natural theology which, however dull or imperfect the medium through which it is viewed, presents us with something different from a total obscuration. There is a book of observation open to all men, in whose characters, indistinct though they be, we may read if not the signals at least the symptoms of a Divinity—and which, if not enough for the purpose of our seeing, are at least enough to make us responsible for the direction in which we are looking. The doctrines of this natural theology may not bear the decided impress of verities upon them—so that as the conclusions of a full and settled belief they may not be valuable. But they at least stand forth in the aspect of verisimilitudes—so that as calls to attention and further inquiry they are highly valuable. There was such

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a theology prior to the Christian revelation—and even still there is a real, though not perhaps very definable limit between those truths of the whole science of theology which lie within the ken of nature, and those which lie without the ken of nature, but within the ken of revelation.

35. And lastly, the telescope hath immeasurably extended the dominion of astronomical science. Objects, though before within the limits of vision yet descried but faintly, have had vivid illumination shed upon them; and an immensity teeming with secrets before undiscoverable hath been evolved on the contemplation of men. A world hath been expanded into a universe; and natural astronomy shrinks into a very little thing, when compared with that mighty system which the great instrument of modern revelation hath unfolded. What an injustice to this noble science, on the part of one of its expounders—did he limit himself to the information of the eye; and forbear every allusion to the powers or informations of the telescope. What a creeping and inadequate representation could he bring forth of it, if with no other materials than the phenomena of vision, he was barred either by ignorance of the telescope, or by a wilful contempt for its performances, from the glories of the higher astronomy.

36. This consummates the analogy. By what may be termed an instrument of discovery too, a spiritual telescope, the science of Theology has been extended beyond its natural dimensions. By the word of God, the things of Heaven have been brought nigh to us; and the mysteries of an

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ulterior region, impalpable to the eye of man, because utterly beyond its reach, have been opened to his view. It is that boundary where the light of nature ends and the light of revelation begins, which marks the separation between the respective provinces of Moral Philosophy and the Christian Theology. In demonstrating the credentials of Scripture we authenticate as it were the informations of the telescope. In expounding the contents of Scripture we lay before you the substance of these informations. We affirm the vast enlargement which has thence accrued to Theology; from both the richness and the number of those places in the science to which man has been thereby introduced, and that otherwise would have been wholly inaccessible. There are men who can glory in the discoveries of modern science, and feel contemptuously of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet so meagre truly is their academic theism, notwithstanding the pomp of its demonstrations—that to suppress the doctrines of the Gospel were to inflict the same mutilation on the high theme of the celestial ethics, as astronomy would undergo by suppressing the informations of the telescope.

37. We should not have expatiated at such length on this distinction between the Ethics and the Objects of Theology—had we not felt urged by the paramount importance of a principle which should be made as plain as may be to every understanding. And it is this—that from the very embryo of thought or feeling on the subject of religion, and in the rudest possible state of humanity, there is what may be called a moving moral force on the

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spirit of man which, if he obey, will conduct him onward through successive manifestations, to what in his circumstances is a right state of belief in religion—and which if he resist, will supply the subject matter of his righteous condemnation. It should be made obvious that, in no circumstances whatever, he is beyond the pale of Heaven's jurisprudence; and that whether or not he have light for the full assurance of his understanding, he has light enough to try his disposition towards God—both to prompt his desire towards Him, and give direction to his inquiries after him. Even on the lowly platform of the Terrestrial Ethics this principle comes into operation; and in virtue of it, every mind which feels as it ought, and aspires as it ought, will be at least set in motion and come to all the light which is within its reach. "He that doeth truth," says the Saviour, "cometh to the light." He that is rightly affected by the Ethics of the question, cometh to the Objects: and thus an entrance is made on the field of the Celestial Ethics, and possession taken by the mind of at least one section of it—Natural Theology. But after this is traversed; and the ulterior or revealed Theology has come into prospect, we hold that the same impulse which carried him onwards to the first will carry him onwards to the second. We shall therefore resume the consideration of this principle after that we have ended our exposition of the natural or the academic theism. And next in importance to the question "What are those conclusive proofs on the side of Religion which make it our duty to believe?" is the question

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"What are those initial presumptions which make it our duty to inquire?"

38. It is impossible to say how much or how little of evidence for a God may lie in these first surmisings, these vague and shadowy imaginations of the mind respecting Him. They serve a great moral purpose notwithstanding—whether when entertained and followed out by man they act as an impellent to further inquiry, or when resisted they fasten upon him the condemnation of impiety. An argument for the existence of a Divinity has been grounded on the fact of such being the universal impression. We may not be able precisely to estimate the argument; but this affects not the importance of the fact itself, as being a thing of mighty subservience to the objects of a Divine administration—bringing a moral force on the spirits of all men, and so bringing all within the scope of a judicial reckoning. This applies indeed to the whole system of Natural Theology. It may be of invaluable service, even though it fall short of convincing us. We may never thoroughly entertain the precise weight or amount of its proofs. But this does not hinder their actually being of a certain and substantive amount, whereupon follows a corresponding amount or aggravation of moral unfairness in our resistance of them—known to God though unknown to ourselves. Enough if it be such as to challenge our serious attention, though it may not challenge our full and definite belief—and whether Natural Theology has to offer such a proof on the side of religion as enables us absolutely to decide the question, yet high is the function which

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it discharges if it offer such a precognition as lays upon us the duty of farther entertaining it.

39. For, after having traversed the field of Natural Theology and come to the ulterior margin of it, it will be found that though ignorant of all which is before us in Christianity, there will still be the same moving force carrying us forward to its investigations, as that which now makes it morally imperative upon us to prosecute the inquiry after God. If it be morally incumbent on us now to follow out the faintest incipient notices of a Deity, it will be equally incumbent on us then to follow out the same notices of a profest, if at all a likely messenger from the sanctuary of His special dwelling-place. Now this is precisely what we shall come within sight of, after having finished the lessons of natural theism. There will then be offered to our observation a certain historical personage—bearing at least such a creditable aspect and such verisimilitude of a divine commission, that we cannot without violence to the ethical principles of the subject bid it away from our mind by an act of summary rejection. In the revealed, as well as in the natural religion, there is a *prima facie* evidence which, if not amounting to a claim on our belief, at least amounts to a claim on our attention. There may not *instanter* be put into our hands the materials of a valid proof, so as to challenge all at once from us a favourable verdict. But there will at least be put into our hands the materials of a valid precognition so as to challenge from us a fair trial. It may not announce itself; and what question whether in science or in history ever does so?

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—it may not announce itself as worthy of our immediate conviction; but it will announce itself as worthy of an immediate hearing. If there be not so much at the very first, of the certainty of truth as shall compel us to receive; there will at least be as much of the semblance of truth as should compel us to listen and to look after. And whether one looks to that expression of moral honesty which sits on the character and sayings of Jesus Christ, or cast a regard, however rapid and general, on the testimony and the sufferings and the apparent worth of those who followed in His train; and after this forbears a closer inquiry—he incurs the same delinquency of spirit which we have already charged upon him who can step abroad with open eye among the glories of the creation, yet remain unmoved by any desire of gratitude or even of curiosity to the question of a Creator.

40. But there is one special advantage which we should not omit noticing in our study of the Natural prior to our study of the Christian argument. It may not prepare us for justly estimating the outward credentials of the embassy—but it will enable us to recognise other credentials in the very substance and contents of the embassy. After, in fact, that the theology of the schools has done its uttermost, it but lands us in certain desiderata which, if not met and not satisfied, leave nothing to humanity but the utmost destitution and despair. But if, on the other hand, these desiderata are met by the counterpart doctrines of Christianity—if the unresolved problems of the one theology do find their solution and their adjust-

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ment in the revelations of the other theology, one cannot imagine a more inviting presumption in favour of Christianity—a presumption which may at length brighten into an overwhelming proof; and thus furnish conviction to a man who, though a perfect stranger to all erudition and history, may find enough of evidence struck out between his bible and his conscience to light him on his path. This is an internal evidence—the rudimental lessons of which we are in fact learning while we study the lessons of natural theology—a system which, with all its defects, performs a very high preliminary function,—seeing, that, by its dim and dawning probabilities, if not the obligation to believe, at least the obligation to inquire, is most rightfully laid upon us; and, that out of its very imperfections, an effective argument may be drawn in favour of that higher theology, in whose promises and truths every imperfection of nature meets with its appropriate and all-sufficient remedy.

41. Whether, then, at the commencement of the one inquiry or of the other, let us enter upon it in the spirit so admirably delineated by Seneca in the following sentence:—"Si introimus templa compositi, si ad sacrificia accessuri vultum submittimus, si in omne argumentum modestiæ fingimur; quanto hoc magis facere debemus, cum de sideribus, de stellis, de natura deorum disputamus, nequid temere, nequid impudenter, aut ignorantes affirmemus, aut scientes mentiamur."

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CHAPTER III.

Of the Metaphysics which have been resorted to on the side of Theism.

DR. CLARKE'S A PRIORI ARGUMENT ON THE BEING OF A GOD.

1. ALL have heard of the famous *a priori* argument of Dr. Clarke—an argument which Dr. Reid does homage to as the speculation of superior minds; but whether it be as solid as it is sublime, he professes himself wholly unable to determine.*

2. On this subject Dr. Thomas Brown is greatly more confident. "I conceive," he tells us, "the abstract arguments which have been adduced to show that it is *impossible* for *matter* to have existed from eternity—by reasoning on what has been termed *necessary existence*, and the incompatibility of this *necessary existence* with the qualities of matter—to be relics of the mere *verbal logic* of the schools, as little capable of producing conviction as any of the wildest and most absurd of the technical scholastic reasonings, on the properties, or supposed properties, of entity and non-entity."

3. But let us not dismiss an argument, which so deeply infused what may be called the Theistical Literature of England for the first half of the last century, without some examination.

* "These," says Dr. Reid, "are the speculations of men of superior genius—but whether they be solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination into a region beyond the limits of the human understanding, I am unable to determine."

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4. What then we hold to be the first questionable assumption in the reasonings of Dr. Clarke, is that by which he appears to confound a physical with either a logical or mathematical necessity. We feel no difficulty in conceding to him the necessary existence of that which has existed from eternity—and that the necessity for its existence resides in itself and not in any thing apart from itself. That which has been created by something else both came into being, and continues we may also admit to be, in virtue of a power that is without it; and it is to this power exoteric to itself that we have to look for the ground both of its first and its abiding existence. But the thing which has existed for ever must also have some ground on which it continues to be, rather than that it should not be, or go to annihilation; and this ground on which at present it continues to be, must be the same with the ground on which it continued to be at any past moment. But if it never had a beginning this ground or principle of existence must have been from everlasting—the present ground in fact, on which it continues to exist, having abidden with it through the whole of its past eternity as the ground on which it exists at all. But as we are not to look for this ground in the fiat of another—it must be looked for in the necessity of its own nature—it contains within itself the necessity for its own existence.

5. Now what is the inference which Dr. Clarke has drawn from this necessity? The word is applied to speculative truths as well as to substantive things. The truth of a proposition is often neces-

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sarily involved in the terms of it, or in the definition of these terms—just as the properties of a circle lie surely enveloped in the description of a circle. Nay a proposition may be so constructed that the opposite thereof shall involve at first sight a logical absurdity—so that this opposite cannot possibly be apprehended, or even imagined by the mind. Its truth is necessarily bound up in the very terms of it. It may be said to contain its own evidence within itself, or rather to contain within itself the necessity of its being admitted among the existent truths of Philosophy. The mind cannot, though it would, put it forth of its own belief; or, in other words, put it forth of the place which it occupies within the limits of necessary and universal truth. Now this test of a logical or mathematical necessity in the existent truths of speculation, he would make also the test of a physical necessity in the existent things of substantive and actual Nature. He confounds we think a logical with an actual impossibility. Insomuch that if the conception of the non-existence of any actual thing involve in it no logical impossibility, then that thing is not necessarily existent. He applies the same test to the things of which it is alleged that they necessarily exist, as to the propositions of which it is alleged that they are necessarily true. He holds that if things do necessarily exist, we cannot conceive this thing not to be—just as when propositions have in them an axiomatic certainty, we cannot conceive these things not to be true. And so on the other hand if we can conceive any existent thing not to be, then that

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thing exists but does not exist necessarily. It has not the ground of its existence in itself—even as a necessary truth has its evidence or the ground of its trueness in itself. And therefore the ground of its existence must be in another beside itself. It must have had a beginning.—It must not have existed from eternity.

6. It will be at once seen how when furnished with such an instrument of demonstration as this—he could on the strength of a mere logical category, go forth on the whole of this peopled universe and pronounce of all its matter and of all mind but the one and universal mind that they have been created. We can conceive them not to exist—and this without any of that violence which is felt by the mind, when one is asked to receive as true that which carries some logical or mathematical contradiction on the face of it. "The only true idea," he says, "of a self-existent or necessarily existing Being, is the idea of a Being the supposition of whose not existing is an express contradiction." "But the material world," he afterwards says, "cannot possibly be such a being"—for "unless the material world exists necessarily, by an absolute necessity in its own nature, so as that it must be an express contradiction to suppose it not to exist; it cannot be independent and of itself eternal."* This argument is reiterated in the following terms—"'Tis manifest the material world cannot exist necessarily, if without a contradiction we can con-

* This and the other extracts from Clarke given within inverted commas are quotations from his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.

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ceive it either not to be or to be in any respect otherwise than it now is." He proceeds all along on the assumption that there is no necessity in the substantive existence of things, unless the denial of that existence involves a logical contradiction in terms. Nay, if without such contradiction we can imagine any variation in the modes or forms of matter from those which obtain actually, this is enough with him to expel from matter the property of self-existence. Ere we can award to matter this property, "it must," he says, "be a contradiction in terms to suppose more or fewer stars, more or fewer planets, or to suppose their size, figure, or motion, different from what it now is, or to suppose more or fewer plants and animals upon the earth, or the present ones of different shape and bigness from what they now are." At this rate, it will be observed, if we can imagine only five planets and without any such contradiction as that three and four make five—this of itself is proof that the actual state of the planetary system, or the actual state of matter whereof this system is a part, is not a necessary state, and so matter is not necessarily self-existent. In like manner the motion of matter is held not to be necessary because it is no contradiction in terms to suppose any matter to be at rest. Thus throughout, our powers or possibilities of conception within, are with him the measures or grounds of inference as to the realities of Being without. He denies the necessary existence of matter, merely because we can conceive it not to exist; and the necessity of motion, because we can conceive of other direc-

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tions to it than those which obtain actually; and a necessity for the actual order or number or figure of material things, because without logical absurdity we can conceive of them variously. The necessary trueness of eternal truths may be discovered thus, that in the terms of that proposition which affirmed their non-trueness there would be contradiction. And so he would have it that the necessary existence of eternal things may be discovered thus, that in the terms of that proposition which affirmed their non-existence there would be the like contradiction. And therefore when the opposite of any existent thing can be imagined without such contradiction, it exists not necessarily —nor is it of itself eternal. The logical is made to be identical with, or made to be the test and the measure of, the actual or the physical necessity. The one is confounded with the other; and this we hold to be the first fallacy of the *a priori* argument.

7. On the strength of this fallacy, the puny mind of man hath usurped for itself an intellectual empire over the high things of immensity and eternity—subjugating the laws of nature throughout all her wide amplitudes to the laws of human thought—and finding, as it were, within the little cell of its own cogitations the means of an achievement so marvellous, as that of pronouncing alike on all the objects of infinite space, and on all the events of infinite duration. Because I can imagine Jupiter to be a sphere instead of a spheroid; and no logical absurdity stands in the way of such imagination–therefore Jupiter must have been created. Because he has only four satellites, whilst I can

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figure him to have ten; and there is not the same arithmetical falsity in this supposition, as in that three and one make up ten—therefore all the satellites must have had a beginning. Because I can picture of matter that it might have been variously disposed, that its motions and its magnitudes and its forms may have been different from what they are, and that space might have been more or less filled by it—because there is not in short a universal *plenum* all whose parts are immoveably at rest—in this Dr. Clarke beholds a sufficient ground for the historical fact that a time was when matter was not, or at least that to the power of another beside itself, it owes its place and its substantive Being in our universe. We must acknowledge ourselves to be not impressed by such reasoning. For aught I know or can be made by the light of nature to believe—matter may, in spite of those its dispositions which he calls arbitrary, have the necessity within itself of its own existence—and yet that be neither a logical nor a mathematical necessity. It may be a physical necessity—the ground of which I understand not, because placed transcendentally above my perceptions and my powers—or lying immeasureably beyond the range of my contracted and ephemeral observation.

8. But we have only touched on what may be called the negative part of the *a priori* argument—that by which matter is divested of self-existence. Thence, on the stepping-stone of actual matter, existent though not self-existent, might we pass by inference to a superior and antecedent Being from whom it hath sprung. But this were de-

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scending to the *a posteriori* argument—whereas the high pretension is, that in the light of that same principle which enables the mind to discard from all matter the property of self-existence, may it without the intervention of any derived or created thing lay immediate hold on the truth of a self-existent God. This forms what we might call the positive part of the *a priori* argument. The truth is, if matter be not self-existent, because the supposition of its non-existence involves in it no felt and resistlessly felt contradiction; then the supposition of the non-existence of that which really is a self-existent Being must involve in it such a contradiction. "This necessity must," to use the language of Dr. Clarke, "force itself upon us whether we will or no, even when we are endeavouring to suppose that no such Being exists." This is the same principle on which we have animadverted already; but there appears, we think, to be a second and a distinct fallacy involved in the application of it. What is that in the whole compass of thought, whose existence must force itself upon the mind—and whose non-existence involves that contradiction which the mind with all its efforts cannot possibly admit into its belief. The answer is space and time. We can imagine matter to be swept away and the space which it occupies to be left behind. But we cannot imagine this space to be swept away. We cannot suppose either immensity or eternity to be removed out of the universe, any more than we can remove the relation of equality between twice two and four. "To suppose," he adds, "immensity removed out

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of the universe or not necessarily eternal is an express contradiction." "To suppose any part of space removed, is to suppose it removed from and out of itself; and to suppose the whole to be taken away, is supposing it to be taken away from itself—that is to be taken away while it still remains which is a contradiction in terms." The language of Sir Isaac Newton to the same effect is—"Moveantur partes Spatii de locis suis, et movebuntur (ut ita dicam) de seipsis." Here then is a something, if you choose thus to designate either of the elements of space or time—here is a something which fulfils what is affirmed to be the essential condition of necessary existence. Its non-existence involves a contradiction which the mind cannot possibly receive; and its existence is forced upon the mind by a necessity as strong as either any logical or any mathematical.

9. Now it is at the transition which the argument makes from the necessary existence of space and time to the necessary existence of God that we apprehend the second fallacy to lie. Eternity and immensity, it is allowed, are not substances—they are only attributes, and, incapable as they are of existing by themselves, they necessarily suppose a substantive Being in which they are inherent. "For modes and attributes," says Dr. Clarke, "exist only by the existence of the substance to which they belong." The denial then of such a Being is held to be tantamount to the denial both of infinite space and of everlasting successive duration—and so such denial involves contradiction in it. It is with him a contradiction in terms to

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assert no immensity and no eternity; and to suppose that there is no Being in the universe to which these attributes or modes of existence are necessarily inherent is also a contradiction in terms. Now, it is here we think that the *non-sequitur* lies. We do not perceive how boundless space and boundless duration imply either a material or an immaterial substratum in which these may reside as but the modes or qualities. We can conceive unlimited space, empty and empty for ever, of all substances whether material or immaterial—and we see neither logical nor mathematical impossibility in the way of such a conception. We do not feel with Dr. Clarke that the notion of immense space as if it were absolutely nothing is an express contradiction. Nor do we feel aught to convince in the scholastic plausibility of such sentences as the following: "For nothing is that which has no properties or modes whatever. That is to say, it is that of which nothing can truly be affirmed, and of which every thing can truly be denied, which is not the case of immensity or space." In spite of this we can imagine no eternal and infinite Being in the universe—we can imagine an infinite nothing; nor do feel that in so doing, we imagine eternity and immensity removed out of the universe while they at the same time still continue there. There is nothing it appears to us in this scholastic jingle about modes and substances that leads by any firm or solid pathway to the stupendous conclusion of a God. Both Space and Time can be conceived without a substance of which they are but the attributes—nor is it at all clear that

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these modes imply a substantive Being to which they belong.*—Now the main stay of the *a priori* argument is that Eternity and Immensity are modes—and as we cannot rid ourselves of the conception of a stable existence in the modes, so neither therefore can we rid ourselves of the conception of an existent substance to which these modes belong. We repeat that we have no faith in the product of such excogitation as this—and should as little think of building upon it a system of Theism, as we should of subordinating the realities of History or Nature to the mere technology of Schoolmen.

10. However interesting, then, the modesty of Dr. Reid on the subject of the *a priori* argument, yet we cannot but regard the deliverance of the younger Metaphysician Thomas Brown as greatly the sounder of the two—although in it, perhaps, there is a certain air of confident temerity, especially as he only pronounces on the defects of the argument without expounding them. And if any futile or inconclusive argument have been devised for the support of religion, it is a real service to discard it from the controversy altogether. It is detaching an element of weakness from the cause. A doctrine stands all the more firm when placed on a compact and homogeneous basis—instead of resting on a pedestal which like the feet of Nebu-

* Sir Isaac Newton seems to have penned the following sentences of a Scholium Generale under some such conception as this:—"Deus non eternitas et infinitas, sed eternus et infinitus; non duratio vel spatium, sed durat et adest, et existendo semper et ubique durationem et spatium, eternitatem et infinitatem constituit.

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chadnezzar's image is partly of clay and partly of iron. Let us be assured that a weak or a wrong reason is not only not an accession but is a positive mischief to the interests of truth—a mischief indeed which Dr. Brown has well adverted to in the following sentences:—"Still more superfluous must be all those reasonings with respect to the existence of the Deity, from the nature of certain conceptions of our mind, independent of the phenomena of design, which are commonly termed reasonings *a priori*, reasonings, that if strictly analyzed, are found to proceed on some assumption of the very truth for which they contend, and that, instead of throwing additional light on the argument for a Creator of the universe, have served only to throw on it a sort of darkness, by leading us to conceive that there must be some obscurity in truths, which could give an occasion to reasonings so obscure. God and the world which he has formed—these are our great objects. Every thing which we strive to place *between* these is *nothing*. We see the universe, and, seeing it, we believe in its Maker. It is the universe, therefore, which is our argument, and our only argument; and as *it* is powerful to convince us, God *is*, or is *not*, an object of our belief." And again —"The arguments commonly termed *metaphysical*, on this subject, I have always regarded, as absolutely void of force, unless in so far as they proceed on a tacit assumption of the physical argument, and, indeed, it seems to me no small corroborative proof of the force of this physical argument, that its remaining impression on our

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mind has been sufficient to save us from any doubt, as to that existence, which the obscure and laborious reasonings, *a priori*, in support of it, would have led us to *doubt*, rather than to *believe*."*

11. We shall not go over the whole unsatisfactory metaphysics of that period—and whereof Dr. Clarke is far the ablest advocate and expounder. For the sake of our intellectual discipline, it is well, however, to familiarize ourselves with his celebrated demonstration, which though in effect vitiated by the one or two assumptions that we have specified, is nevertheless an admirable specimen of close and consecutive reasoning. It is not to be marvelled at, that possessed of such dialectic powers, he should have tinged with his own spirit almost all the authorship of natural theology at that period—till at length, in the impotent hands of his followers and imitators, it wrought itself out of all credit when unaccompanied by those redeeming qualities which buoyed up the performance of this great master, and has perpetuated its character as a standard and classical work, even to the present day. The whole of the Boyle lectureship, for example, was for many years deeply infused by it. Bentley, so able in other departments, presents us in his sermons on the subject, with what we should call, a perfect caricature of this *a priori* extravagance. It even deforms, at times, the pages of Foster, who is the most eloquent, and perhaps the best writer of that age on natural religion. As to Abernethy, we hold his book, in spite of the high character which was

* Brown's Lectures, XCII. and XCIII.

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affixed to it some half century ago, as so utterly meagre and insipid, that one cannot without the slackening of all his mental energies, accomplish the continuous perusal of it—and therefore it really matters not what quarter he gives, in his pages of cold and feeble rationality, to the *a priori* argument. It is of more consequence to be told that it is an argument patronised by Wollaston, who, in his "Religion of Nature Delineated," imitates Clarke in making our ignorance of the *Quomodo* the foundation of a positive argument. "If matter," he says, "be self-existent, I do not see how it comes to be restrained to a place of certain capacity—how it comes to be limited in other respects—or why it should not exist in a manner that is in all respects perfect." And just because *he sees not how*—therefore matter *must* derive its existence from some other being who causes it to be just what it is. Because we do not see the reason why matter should have been placed here and not there in immensity—because we cannot tell the specific cause of its various forms, and modifications, and movements—because of our inability to explore the hidden recesses of the past—and so to find out the necessary ground, if ought there is, for the being and the properties of every planet and of every particle—are we therefore to infer, that there is no such ground, and for no better reason than that just by us it is undiscoverable? The reasoning of Wollaston comes to this—Because we do not see how matter came to be restrained to a particular place—therefore, it must not have been so restrained by an eternal necessity.

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Our own inference would have been diametrically the opposite of this. Because we see not how, we should say not how. It is a strange argument to found, as Clarke and Wollaston have done, on the impotence and incapacity of the human mind, that its very ignorance should authorize it to sport such positive and peremptory dogmata as have been advanced by them on the high mysteries of primeval being and primeval causation.

12. Dr. Clarke's style of reasoning upon this subject, has now fallen into utter disesteem and desuetude. He himself disclaims the old scholastic methods of argumentation, while there is much of his own that now ranks with the impracticable subtleties of the middle ages. He deals in the categories of a higher region than that which is at all familiar to human experience—and we fear that when he attempts to demonstrate the non-eternity of matter, and that to spirit alone belong the attributes of primeval necessity and self-existence, he leaves behind him that world of sense and observation within which alone the human mind is yet able to expatiate. After the modest declaration of Dr. Reid, it may be presumptuous in us to pass upon this argument a summary and confident rejection. But we may at least confess the total want of any impression which it has made upon our understanding—and that with all our partialities for the *argumentum a posteriori*, we hold it with Paley greatly more judicious, instead of groping for the evidence of a Divinity among the transcendental generalities of time, and space, and matter, and spirit, and the grounds of a necessary and

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eternal existence for the one, while nought but modifications and contingency can be observed of the other—we hold it more judicious simply to open our eyes on the actual and peopled world around us—or to explore the wondrous economy of our own spirits, and try if we can read, as in a book of palpable and illuminated characters, the traces or the forth-goings of a creative mind anterior to, or at least distinct from matter, and which both arranged it in its present order and continues to overrule its processes.

13. Nevertheless, let us again recommend the perusal of Clarke's Demonstration. One feels himself as if placed by it on the border of certain transcendental conceptions, the species of an ideal world, which men of another conformation may fancy, and perhaps even see to be realities. And certain it is, that the very existence of such high thoughts in the mind of man may be regarded as the presentiment or promise of a high destination. So that however unable to follow out the reasonings of Clarke or Newton, when they convert our ideas of infinity and eternity into the elements of such a demonstration as they have bequeathed to the world—nothing, we apprehend, can be more just or beautiful than the following sentences of Dugald Stewart, when he views these ideas as the earnests of our coming immortality:—"Important use may also be made of these conceptions of immensity and eternity, in stating the argument for the future existence of the soul. For why was the mind of man rendered capable of extending his views in point of time, beyond the limit of human

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transactions; and, in point of space, beyond the limits of the visible universe—if all our prospects are to terminate here; or why was the glimpse of so magnificent a scene disclosed to a being, the period of whose animal existence bears so small a proportion to the vastness of his desires? Surely this conception of the necessary existence of space and time, of immensity and eternity, was not forced continually upon the thoughts of man for no purpose whatever? And to what purpose can we suppose it to be subservient, but to remind those who make a proper use of their reason of the trifling value of some of those objects we at present pursue, when compared with the scenes on which we may afterwards enter; and to animate us in the pursuit of wisdom and virtue, by affording us the prospect of an indefinite progression?"*

14. Before leaving this subject, we would remark on what may be called a certain subordinate application of the *a priori* argument—not for the demonstration of the being, but for the demonstration of the attributes of God. Dr. Clarke himself admits the impossibility of proving the divine intelligence in this way—though, with this exception, he attempts an *a priori* proof for the other natural attributes of the Godhead—and the argument certainly becomes more lucid and convincing as he carries it forward from these to the other attributes. The goodness, the truth, the justice of the Divinity, for example, may not only be inferred by an ascending process of discovery from the works

* Stewart's Philosophy of the Moral and Active Powers. Vol. I. p. 336.

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and the ways of God—but they are also inferred by a process of derivation from the power, and the unity, and the wisdom. From the amplitude of His natural, they infer the equal amplitude of His moral characteristics,—judging Him superior to falsehood, because He is exempted from the temptations to weakness; and to malignity because exempted from the temptations to rivalship; and to caprice because in the perfection of his wisdom there is the full guarantee for his doing always what is best. We give these merely as specimens of a style of reasoning which we shall not stop to appreciate—and instead of attempting any further to excogitate a Deity in this way; let us now search if there be any reflection of Him from the mirror of that universe which he has formed. It may be a lowlier—but we deem it a safer enterprise—instead of groping our way among the incomprehensibles of the *a priori* region, to keep by the certainties which are spread out before us on the region of sense and observation—to look at the actual economy of things, and thence gather as we may, such traces of a handiwork as might announce a designer's hand—to travel up and down on that living scene which can be traversed by human footsteps, and gazed at with human eyes—and search for the impress, if any there be, of the intelligent power that either called it into being, or that arranged the materials which compose it.

15. But our examination of the *a priori* reasoning will not be thrown away—if it guide our attempts to separate the weak from the strong parts of the Theistical argument. More especially

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it should help us to discriminate between the inference that is grounded on the true existence of matter, the inference that is grounded on the orderly arrangements of matter. The argument for the being of a God drawn from the former consideration, tinged as it is throughout with the *a priori* spirit we hold to be altogether mystical and meaningless—insomuch that for the doctrine of an original creation of matter we hold it essential that the light of revelation should be superadded to the dull and glimmering light, or rather perhaps to the impenetrable darkness of nature. We agree with Dr. Brown in thinking "that matter as an unformed mass, existing without relation of parts, would not of itself have suggested the notion of a Creator—since in every hypothesis something material or mental must have existed uncaused, and since existence, therefore, is not necessarily a mark of previous causation, unless we take for granted an infinite series of causes." In the mere existence of an unshapen or unorganized mass, we see nothing that indicates its non-eternity or its derivation from an antecedent mind—while on the other hand, even though nature should incline us to the thought that the matter of this earth and these heavens was from everlasting, there might be enough in the goodly distribution of its parts to warrant the conclusion that Mind has been at work with this primeval matter, and at least fetched from it materials for the structure of many a wise and beneficent mechanism. It is well that Revelation has resolved for us the else impracticable mystery, and given us distinctly to understand, that to the fiat of a great

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Eternal spirit, matter stands indebted as well for its existence and its laws, as for its numerous collocations of use and of convenience. We hold that without a Revealed Theology we should not have known of the creation of matter out of nothing, but that by dint of a Natural Theology alone we might have inferred a God from the useful disposition of its parts. It is good to know what be the strong positions of an argument and to keep by them—taking up our intrenchments there—and willing to relinquish all that is untenable. It is not the way to advance but really to discredit the cause of Natural Theology, when set forward by its injudicious defenders to an enterprise above its strength. Nothing satisfactory can be made of those obscure and scholastic generalities by which matter is argued to be incongruous with Eternity; and that therefore, itself originated from nothing, it must have a creative mind for the antecedent not of its harmonies and adaptations alone but of its substantive Being. We should like a firmer stepping-stone than this by which to arrive at the conclusion of a God. For this purpose we would dissever the argument founded on the phenomenon of the mere existence of matter, from the argument founded on the phenomenon of the relations between its parts. The one impresses the understanding just as differently from the other, as a stone of random form lying upon the ground impresses the observer differently from a watch. The mere existence of matter, in itself, indicates nothing. They are its forms and its combinations and its organic structures which alone speak to us

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of a Divinity—just as it is not the clay but the shape into which it has been moulded that announces the impress of a Designer's hand. The metaphysical argument which we should like to discard from this controversy wants altogether to our mind the character of obviousness. We can afford to give it up. It is truly a dead weight upon the cause. It is like seeking for the indications of an artist's hand in the rude and raw material upon which he operates—when we might behold them at once in the finished work of those exquisite fabrications which hold forth irresistibly the marks of contrivance and so of a contriver.*

16. In combating an argument for a doctrine, we are not therefore combating the doctrine itself. Dr. Clarke has failed, we think in his attempt to demonstrate the non-eternity of matter—but it follows not that because we have attempted to expose this failure, we advocate the eternity of matter. It is well that our belief in the truths of religion does not stand or fall with the success or the failure of any human expounder. We happen to think that on the abstract question of the creation of matter out of nothing, there is a want of clear and decisive manifestation by the light of nature; and that for the establishment of what we hold to be the right and orthodox position upon this question,

* Let us here present the following short and judicious extract from Dr. Fiddes' work entitled "Theologia Speculativa or a Body of Divinity." "But to discover the weakness of any argument in particular which may be brought to prove a fundamental article of religion is not, as some pious men have supposed, to do religion disservice—but only shows it does not stand in need of any artifices and has nothing to fear from a fair ingenuous and free examination."

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there is an incompetency not in the *a priori* argument alone, but in every argument which the unaided reason of man can devise. We wonder not for example, that Aristotle, unblest and unvisited as he was by any communication from Heaven, admitted both an eternal matter and an eternal mind into his creed—for in truth the brightest and most convincing evidences for the one might for aught we know, consist with the aboriginal and everlasting occupancy of the other in our universe. These evidences as we shall afterwards see, are grounded not on the existence of matter, but on the order and disposition of its parts—and point to the conclusion, not that there must have been an intelligent spirit that willed the matter into being, but that there must have been an intelligent spirit who willed it into all those beauteous and beneficial arrangements which we every where behold. It is revelation alone we apprehend which has completely fixed and ascertained the proposition, that God not only fashioned our universe into its present mechanism and form; but that he also created the materials from which it is composed. He not only moulded the clay; but he made it, and made it out of nothing. Nature perhaps cannot pronounce decisively on the making; but of the exquisite moulding, of the goodly dispositions and structures that bespeak contrivance and a contriver, it taketh ample cognizance—so that it cannot look with intelligence to any department of observation or of science without a powerful impression that the hand of a divinity has been there.

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CHAPTER IV.

Of the Metaphysics which have been resorted to on the side of Theism.

(MR. HUME'S OBJECTION TO THE A POSTERIORI ARGUMENT, GROUNDED ON THE ASSERTION THAT THE WORLD IS A SINGULAR EFFECT.)

1. THE doctrine of innate ideas in the mind, is wholly different from the doctrine of innate tendencies in the mind—which tendencies may lie undeveloped till the excitement of some occasion have manifested or brought them forth. In a newly formed mind, there is no idea of nature or of a single object in nature—yet no sooner is an object presented, or is an event observed to happen, than there is elicited the tendency of the mind to presume on the constancy of nature. At least as far back as our observation extends, this law of the mind is in full operation. Let an infant for the first time in its life, strike on the table with a spoon; and, pleased with the noise, it will repeat that stroke with every appearance of a confident anticipation that the noise will be repeated also. It counts on the invariableness wherewith the same consequent will follow the same antecedent. In the language of Dr. Thomas Brown, these two terms make up a sequence—and there seems to exist in the spirit of man, not an underived, but an aboriginal faith, in the uniformity of nature's sequences.

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2. This instinctive expectation of a constancy in the succession of events is not the fruit of experience; but is anterior to it. The truth is that experience, so far from strengthening this instinct of the understanding as it has been called, seems rather to modify and restrain it. The child who elicited a noise which it likes from the collision of its spoon with the table would, in the first instance, expect the same result from a like collision with any material surface spread out before it—as if placed for example, on the smooth and level sand of a sea-shore. Here the effect of experience would be to correct its first strong and unbridled anticipations—so that in time it would not look for the wished for noise in the infliction of a stroke upon sand or clay or the surface of a fluid, but upon wood or stone or metal. The office of experience here is not to strengthen our faith in the uniformity of nature's sequences, but to ascertain what the sequences actually are. The effect of the experience is not to give the faith, but to the faith to add knowledge. At the outset of its experience a child's confidence in the uniformity of nature is unbounded—and it is in the progress of its experience, that it meets with that which serves to limit the confidence and to qualify it. It goes forth upon external nature furnished beforehand with the expectation of the invariableness which obtains between nature's antecedents and her consequents—but it often falls into mistakes in estimating what the proper antecedents and consequents are. To ascertain this is the great use of experience. The great object of repetition in experiments

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is not to strengthen our confidence in the constancy of nature's sequences—but to ascertain what be the real and precise terms of each sequence. It is for this purpose that experiments are so varied —for in that assemblage of contemporaneous things amid which a given result takes place, it is often not known at the first which of the things is the strict and proper antecedent—and it is to determine this, that sometimes certain of the old circumstances are detached from the groupe and certain new ones added, till the discrimination has been precisely made between what is essential and what is merely accessary in the process.

3. This predisposition to count on the uniformity of nature is an original law of the mind, and is not the fruit of our observation of that uniformity. It has been well stated by Dr. Brown that there is no more of logical dependence between the propositions, that a stone has a thousand times fallen to the earth and a stone will always fall to the earth, than there is between the propositions that a stone has once fallen to the earth and a stone will always fall to the earth. "At whatever link of the chain we begin," he says, "we must always meet with the same difficulty, the conversion of the past into the future. If it be absurd to make this conversion at one stage of inquiry, it is just as absurd to make it at any other stage; and, as far as our memory extends, there never was a time at which we did not make the instant conversion." The truth is, that experience teaches the past only—not the future. It tells us what has happened before the present moment—and to infer

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from this what will happen afterwards, requires the aid of a distinct principle—the instinctive principle of belief, in short, whose reality we are now contending for.

4. The constancy of nature and man's faith in that constancy do not stand related to each other like the terms of a logical proposition, or in the way of cause and consequence. There is a most beneficent harmony between the material and the mental law—but it is altogether a contingent harmony; and the adaptation of the one to the other is perhaps the most precious evidence within the compass of our own unborrowed light, for a presiding intelligence in the formation or arrangements of the universe. The argument unfolded by Dr. Paley with such marvellous felicity and power, is founded chiefly on the fitnesses that meet together in man's coporeal economy, and on the adjustments of its parts to external nature. It is true that our mental economy offers nothing so complex or so palpable on which to raise a similar argument; and yet can we instance a more wonderful adjustment, or one more prolific of good to our species, than that which obtains between the unexcepted uniformity of nature's processes, and the prior independent disposition which resides in the heart of man to count upon that uniformity, and to proceed on the unfaltering faith of it? Were it not for this, man should for ever remain a lost and bewildered creature among the appearances around him—and no experience of his could in the least help to unravel the confusion. The regularity of nature up to the present moment would be of no

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avail, without his faith in the continuance of that regularity—and it is only by the force of this instinctive anticipation, that the memorials of the past serve him as indices by which to guide his way through the futurity that lies before him. The striking accordancy is, that there should be such an expectation deposited in every bosom; and that from every department of the accessible creation there should be to this expectation the response or the echo of one wide and unexcepted fulfilment. It is like a whisper to the heart of man of a universal promise, which can only be executed by a hand of universal agency—and as if the same Being who infused the hope by an energy within, did, by a diffusive energy abroad, cause the response of an unfailing accomplishment to arise from all the amplitudes of creation and providence. This intuitive faith is not the acquisition of experience; but is given as if by the touch of inspiration for the purpose of stamping on experience all its value—not gathered by man from his observation of outward nature; but forming an original part of his own nature, and yet in such glorious harmony with all that is around him throughout the innumerable host of nature's sequences, that he never once by trusting in her constancy is disappointed or deceived. Such is the steadfastness of her manifold processes that nature never misgives from her constancy. Such is the strength of his mental instinct that man never misgives from his confidence. Had it not been for the union of these two man had been incapable of wisdom. The

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establishment of both bespeaks at once the wisdom and the faithfulness of a God.

5. But this harmony between the intellectual constitution of man and the general constitution of nature, is not only of use in a theological argument—it might also be applied to strengthen the foundations of our Philosophy. It forms a demonstration of the perfect safety wherewith we might confide in our ultimate or original principles of belief. We have experimental evidence of this in our anticipation of nature's constancy being so fully realized. This anticipation is not the fruit of experience, but is verified by experience. It is an instinct of the understanding; and that it should have been so met and responded to over the whole domain of creation is like the testimony of a concurrent voice from all things inanimate to the Creator's faithfulness. Seeing that one of the instinctive tendencies of the mind has been so palpably accredited from without—we may commit ourselves, as if to an infallible guidance, in following its other instinctive tendencies. There is a scepticism that is suspicious, as if they were so many false lights, of our original and universal principles whether in judgment or taste or morals—and which looks upon them at best as but the results of an arbitrary organization. From the instance now before us it is plain that the arbiter of our constitution, the artificer of the mechanism of our spirits, has at least most strikingly adapted it to the constitution and the mechanism of external things—the hope or belief of constancy in the one meeting in the other

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with the most rigid and invariable fulfilment. This is the strongest practical vindication which can be imagined, of the unshaken faith that we might place in the instinctive and primary suggestions of nature. It restores that feeling of security to our intellectual processes which the Philosophy of Hume so laboured to unsettle: And we again feel a comfort and a confidence in the exercises of reason—when thus reassured in the solidity of those axioms which are reason's stepping-stones, in the substantive truth and certainty of those first principles whence all argumentation takes its rise.

6. But the mention of David Hume leads to the consideration of that atheistical argument which has been associated with his name—an argument not founded however on any denial of the regularity of nature's sequences—but proceeding on the admission of that regularity; and only assuming the necessity of experience to ascertain what the sequences actually are. Mr. Hume's argument is this: After having once observed the conjunction between any two terms of an invariable sequence—it is granted that from the observed existence of either of the terms, we can conclude without observation the existence of the other—that from a perceived antecedent we can foretell its consequent, although we should not see it; or on the other hand from the perceived consequent we can infer the antecedent, although it should not have been seen by us. Having had the observation once of the two terms A and B, and of the causal relation between them, the appearance of A singly would warrant the anticipation of B, or of B singly the inference of A.

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But then it is required for any such inference that we should have had the observation or experience, at least once, of both these terms; and of the conjunction between them. If we have seen but once in our life a watch made, and coming forth of the hands of a watch-maker; we, in all time coming, can, on seeing the watch only, infer the watch-maker. But this full experience comprehensive of both terms is wanting, it is alleged, in the question of a God. We may have had an experience reaching to both terms of the sequence in watch-making—but we have had no such experience in world-making. Had we but seen a world once made, and coming forth from the observed fiat of an intelligent Deity, then the sight of every other world might have justified the inference that for it too there behoved to have been a world-maker. It is the want of that completed observation which we so often have in the cases of human mechanism, that constitutes it is apprehended the flaw or failure in the customary argument for a God—as founded on the mechanism of nature. It is because the world is to us a singular effect—it is because we have only perceived the consequent a world, and never perceived the alleged antecedent the mandate of a Creator at whose forth-putting some other world had sprung into existence—it is because in this instance we have but witnessed one term of a succession and never witnessed its conjunction with a prior term, that we are hopelessly debarred it is thought, from ever coming soundly or legitimately to the conclusion of a God.

7. The following are so many of the passages

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from Hume containing the argument in his own words: "But it is only when two species of objects are found to be constantly conjoined that we can infer the one from the other; and were an effect presented which was entirely singular and could not be comprehended under any known species, I do not see that we could form any conjecture or inference at all concerning its cause. If experience and observation and analogy be indeed the only guides which we can reasonably follow in inferences of this nature—both the effect and cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to other effects and causes which we know, and which we have found in many instances to be conjoined with each other."* Again—"If we see a house, we conclude with the greatest certainty that it had an architect or builder; because this is precisely that species of effect, which we have experienced to proceed from that species of cause. But surely you will not affirm that the universe bears such a resemblance to a house, that we can with the same certainty infer a similar cause, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect. The dissimilitude is so striking, that the utmost you can here pretend to is a guess, a conjecture, a presumption concerning a similar cause; and how that pretension will be received in the world I leave you to consider."——"When two *species* of objects have always been observed to be conjoined together, I can *infer* by custom the existence of one, wherever I *see* the existence of the other; and this I call an argument from experience.

* Hume's Essays, Vol. II. p. 157, being an extract from his Essay on Providence and a Future State.

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But how this argument can have place, where the objects as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallels or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and act, like the human; because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite, that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance."——"Can you pretend to show any such similarity between the fabric of a house, and the generation of a universe? Have you ever seen nature in any such situation as resembles the first arrangement of the elements? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye? and have you had leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomena, from the first appearance of order to its final consummation? If you have, then cite your experience and deliver your theory."*

8. Now it appears to us that this argument of Hume has not been rightly met by any of his antagonists. Instead of resisting it they have retired from it—and, in fact, done him the homage of conceding the principle on which it rests. They have suffered him to bear away one of the prime supports of Natural Theism; and, to make up for this loss, they have attempted to replace it with another support which I hold to be altogether precarious. Hume denies that we have any ex-

* The above extracts are taken from Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.

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perimental evidence for the being of a God—and that simply because we have not any experience in the making of worlds. Had we observed once or oftener the sequence of two terms A and B—then afterwards on our observing B though alone we might have inferred A. Had we observed though only once, a God employed in making a world—then when another world was presented to our notice we might have inferred a God. But we have never had the benefit of such observation; and hence the conclusion of Mr. Hume is, that the reasoning for a God is not founded on the basis of experience. Now how is this met both by Reid and Stuart?—by conceding that the argument for a God is not an experimental one at all—the inference of design from its effects being a result neither of reasoning nor of experience. When the question is put, on what then is the inference grounded?—the never-failing reply in a difficulty of this sort, and in which more than once these philosophers have taken convenient refuge is, that it is grounded on an intuitive judgment of the mind.

9. Our own opinion of this evasion is that to say the least it was unnecessary—and we think that without recurring to any separate principle on the subject, Mr. Hume's argument might be satisfactorily disposed of, though we had no other ground for the inference of a designing cause, than that upon which we reason from like consequents to the like antecedents that went before them.

10. It appears to us that these philosophers have most unnecessarily mystified the argument

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for a God, besides giving an untrue representation of the right argument. The considerations on which Reid and Stewart would resolve the inference of design from its effects into an original principle, distinct from that by which we infer any other cause from its effects—even our prior observation of the conjunction between them, appear to us most singularly weak and inconclusive. They say that we can only infer design on the part of a fellow-creature from its effects in this instinctive or intuitive way, because we never had any direct perception of his mind at all, and therefore never had a view of the antecedent but only of the consequent. But we have the evidence of consciousness, the strongest of all evidence, for the existence of our own mind; we have both the antecedent and the consequent in this one instance, both the design and its effects when ourselves are the designers; and, from the similarity of those effects which proceed from ourselves to those which proceed from our neighbours, we infer on a sufficient experimental ground that there are design and a designing mind on their part also. It comes peculiarly ill from Mr. Stewart to say that we know nothing of mind but by its operations and effects, who himself has so oft affirmed that all our knowledge of matter comes to us in the same way; and that the properties of which sense informs us as belonging to the one form no better evidence for the substantive existence of matter, than that for the substantive existence of mind afforded by the properties of which consciousness informs us as belonging to the other. And even though we

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should allow that, apart from all that experimental reasoning by which from the observation of what passes with ourselves we make inference as to what passes with others of our kind, we arrive by means of a direct and instinctive perception to the knowledge of the existence of other human minds beside our own—there is no analogy between this case and that of the divine mind as inferred from the effects or the evidences of design in the workmanship of nature. God does not by this workmanship hold himself forth to observers in visible personality as our fellow-creatures do. He has left for our inspection a thousand specimens of skilful and beauteous mechanism; but he has left us to view them as separate from himself. These philosophers would have us to infer a designing God from the works of nature, just as we infer a designing mind in man not from the works of man but from man in the act of working—even as if the divine spirit animated nature in the same manner as the human spirit animates the framework by which it is encompassed. Now the proper analogy is to view a piece of human workmanship, after it is completed and may be seen separately from the man himself; and to compare this with the workmanship of nature viewed separately from God. We take cognizance of the former as the work of man, just because in previous instances we have seen such work achieved by man. This consideration proceeds altogether upon experience; and what we have now to ascertain is, in how far experience warrants us to conclude a designing cause for the workmanship of nature. We hold

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that this conclusion too has a strict experience for its basis; and that, notwithstanding that the principle has been given up by Stewart as is evident from his following reply to Hume's argument. "The argument as is manifest proceeds entirely on the supposition that our inferences of design are in every case the result of experience, the contrary of which has been already sufficiently shown —and which indeed (as Dr. Reid has remarked) if it be admitted as a general truth, leads to this conclusion—that no man can have any evidence of the existence of any intelligent being but himself." *

* Stewart's Philosophy of the Moral and Active Powers, Vol. II. p. 25.

In this treatise Mr. Stewart has rather presented the opinions of others, than come forth in *propria persona* with any sustained pleading of his own; and, as in most of his other performances, instead of grappling with the question, he presents us with the literature of the question—made up of history therefore rather than of argument, and altogether composing but the outline of what had been said or reasoned by other men, though accompanied with a very few slight yet elegant touches from his own hand. We by no means agree with those who think of this interesting personage, that, considering the few substantive additions which he made to philosophy, he therefore as a philosopher had gained an unfair reputation. It is true, he has not added much to the treasures of science; yet, in virtue of a certain halo which by the glow of his eloquence and the purity and nobleness of his sentiments he threw around the cause, he abundantly sustained the honours of it. It reminds us of what is often realized in the higher walks of society, when certain men vastly inferior to others both in family and in fortune, do, in virtue of a certain lofty bearing in which they are upheld by the consciousness of a grace and a dignity that natively belong to them, not usurp the highest place in fashion, but have that place most readily awarded to them by the spontaneous consent and testimony of all. It was thus with Stewart in the world of letters. His rank and reputation there were not owing either to the number or importance of the discoveries achieved by him. But he had what many discoverers have not. He had the sus-

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11. Let us therefore resume our observations on the strong instinctive confidence of the human mind in the uniformity of nature—and thence apply ourselves to the consideration of this seemingly formidable argument.

12. We have already remarked on the perfect agreement which there is between the constancy of nature, and the instinctive belief which men have in that constancy. There seems no necessary connexion between these two things. It might for aught we know have been otherwise. There might have been a tendency in the human mind always to look for the like event in the like circumstances—and this anticipation on our part may have been thwarted at every turn by the most capricious and unlooked for evolutions, on the part of the actual world that is around us. Or there might have been the same uniformity that there is in nature now—but no such constitutional propensity with us to count upon that uniformity. In either case we should not have profited by the lessons of experience. The remembrance of the past could have furnished no materials on which to ground or to guide our expectations of the future.

tained and the lofty spirit of a high-toned academic; and never did any child, whether of science or poetry, breathe in an atmosphere more purely ethereal. The *je ne scais quoi* of manner does not wield a more fascinating power in the circles of fashion, than did the indescribable charm of his rare and elevated genius over our literary circles; and, when we consider the homage of reverence and regard which he drew from general society, we cannot but wish that many successors may arise in his own likeness,—who might build up an aristocracy of learning, that shall infuse a finer element into the system of life, than any which has ever been distilled upon it from the vulgar aristocracies of wealth or of power.

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It is not because of one thing, that nature is constant; but it is because of two things, that nature is constant and that we have been endowed with an irresistible faith in that constancy—it is because of a concurrence in fact between two elements that might have been separated the one from the other, it is because of an adaptation between the mental economy in man and that general economy of things in the midst of which he is placed, that any wisdom at all can be reared on the basis of observation; or that, on the appearances which are before our eyes, we can either reason back to those which have preceded, or forward to those which are hereafter to ensue from them.

13. Our expectation of the constancy of nature in all time coming, because of our experience of that constancy in all past time, is not a deduction of reason—but an immediate and resistless principle of belief in the human constitution. It is no more the fruit of an argumentative process than any sensation or emotion is. That, on the observation of a certain event in given circumstances, there should be a confident anticipation of the same event in the same circumstances—this is the assumed principle of many a reasoning; but it is not reasoning which has conducted us thereto. It is an underived and intuitive belief, and not a belief that we reach by a succession of steps—and is, as far as we can discern, as strong in infancy as it is in mature and established manhood. It is vain to say that the constancy of nature throughout every former generation of the world, is a reason for the constancy of nature throughout every future gene-

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ration of it. The two statements are distinct, the one from the other—and there is surely no logical necessity why because the first statement is true, the second should be true also. Nevertheless, and without reasoning, we are led from believing by observation in the first, irresistibly to believe by anticipation in the second. There is a harmony, but it is a contingent harmony, between our strong instinctive conviction that it shall be so, and the unfailing universal accomplishment of it. The very strongest among the principles of the human understanding is faithfully responded to by the very surest among the processes of external nature; and this adaptation, due to no will and to no reasoning of ours, yet without which reasoning would be left without a basis—is perhaps the most striking proof which can be given, that man, even when stalking in the pride of his intellectual greatness along the high walk of philosophy, is but the creature of an instinct that should ever be leading him astray—had not God made the laws and the arrangements of his universe to correspond with it.

14. But while we thus advocate the independence of the two laws on each other, that is, of the mental or subjective law of man's instinctive faith in the constancy of nature, on the external or objective law of nature's actual constancy—it should well be understood, that the view we are now to give of Hume's atheistical argument does not rest on any metaphysical theory whatever, as to the origin of this universal belief. Whether it be distinct from experience or the fruit of experience, it is not upon this that we join issue with

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our antagonist. Inquirers may differ as to the origin of our belief in the uniformity of nature's successions. On this topic we exact no particular opinion from them. It is enough if we agree in the soundness of that belief, whatever the descent or the derivation of it may have been. It is man's universal judgment, that the same consequents are ever preceded by the same antecedents, and the two questions are altogether distinct from each other—whence does that judgment take its rise, and whether that judgment is a true one. We may differ or agree upon the first. It matters not, if we agree upon the second, which forms the basis of Hume's reasoning. We concede to him his own premises—even that we are not entitled to infer an antecedent from its consequent, unless we have before had the completed observation of both these terms and of the succession between them. We disclaim the aid of all new or questionable principles in meeting his objection, and would rest the argument *a posteriori* for the being of a God, on a strictly experimental basis.

15. The uniformity of nature lies in this, that the same antecedents are always followed by the same consequents. Grant that the former agree in every respect—then the latter will also agree in every respect. This invariable following of two events, the one by the other, is termed a sequence; and there is not a more unfailing or universal characteristic of nature than the constancy of these sequences.

16. For the argument of this chapter it is enough that we and our antagonists have a com-

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mon belief in the constancy of these sequences—though they who think, as we do, that the belief is of instinctive origin, cannot but feel how wondrous the coincidence is between the constancy itself and the fact, that from the very first dawnings of mental perception this constancy is counted upon. It does not at all appear that the experience of nature's constancy is first waited for ere it is anticipated by the mind. And even although it had to be waited for; and the observation had been made for years of nature's constancy—it is still to be explained why we should infer from this the same constancy in the years which are to come. It does not follow that because nature hath proceeded in a certain invariable course throughout the whole retrospect of our experience, it must therefore do the same throughout the whole range of our future anticipations. The one fact does not necessarily involve the other. There has been an unfailing constancy in nature through the years that are past—and there appears no necessity which can be assigned, why on this account there should be as unfailing a constancy of nature through the years that are to come. It may be, or it may not be,—but yet the firm impregnable conviction of all, is that most certainly it shall be—and this anticipation, which all without exception have, is followed up by the most unexcepted fulfilment.

17. The heat that is of a certain temperature will always melt ice. The impulse that hath once given direction and velocity, will always in the same circumstances be followed up with motion.

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The body that is raised from the earth's surface, and then left without support, will always descend. The position of the moon in a certain quarter of the heavens, will always be responded to by the rising or falling tides upon our shores. These antecedents may be variously blended; and this will give rise to different results; but the very same assemblage of antecedents will always be followed by the same consequents. Our own personal experience may have been limited to a few square miles of the earth that we tread upon—yet this would not hinder such a faith in the immutability of nature, that we could bear it in confident application all over the globe. In other words, we count upon this constancy far beyond what we ever have observed of it—and still the topic of our wonder and gratitude is, that a belief in every way so instinctive should be followed up by an accomplishment so sure.

18. But we shall dilate no further on the general position, that our faith in the future constancy of nature is intuitive, and not deduced by any process of reasoning however short, from our observation of its past constancy. Let us here recommend the masterly treatise of Dr. Thomas Brown on Cause and Effect—a philosopher who, with occasional inadvertencies in the ethical department of his course, hath thrown a flood of copious and original light over the mysteries of the human understanding; and who seems, in particular, to have grappled successfully with a question at one time dark and hopeless as the metaphysics of the schoolmen.

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19. Without, therefore, expatiating any farther on the origin of this belief, and certainly without laying the least argumentative stress upon it in the reasonings which we have now to offer—let it suffice for the present that there exists such a belief in our mind, and that it meets with its correspondent reality in nature.

20. There are two processes of inference, which, however identical in their principle, may be distinguished the one from the other. When there is an invariable connexion between certain antecedents and certain consequents—then, upon our seeing the antecedents, we look confidently forward to the appearance of the consequents—or, when we see the consequents, we conclude that their proper antecedents have gone before them. But it may so happen, that various antecedents shall be mingled together at the same time—some of which have an influence upon the result, and some of which have none; but still so as to make it a necessary exercise of mind to disentangle the trains from each other, and to discriminate what be the terms which stand to each other in the strict relation of a sequence that is invariable.

21. But to descend from the obscure language of generalities upon this subject. Let us take the case of a watchmaker, and a watch, the former being the antecedent and the latter the consequent—both of which, and the actual conjunction of which, we have already observed, if we have ever seen a watch made. Now, on looking first to the antecedent, there is room for distinguishing between the proper and the accidental. It were wrong to

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say of this antecedent, that it comprises all the particulars which meet and are assembled together in the person of the watchmaker. It has nothing to do, for example, with the colour of his hair, or with the quality of his vestments, or with the height of his stature, or with the features of his countenance, or with the age and period of his life. The strict and proper antecedent is distinct from one and all of these particulars; and may be said to lie enveloped, as it were, in a mass or assemblage of contemporaneous things which have nothing to do with the fabrication of the watch. The watch, in fact, is the consequent of a purposing mind—putting itself forth in the execution of a mechanism for the indication of time, and possessed of competent skill and power for such an execution. The mind of the observer separates here the essential from the accessary. Should he ever again meet with the forth-putting of the same essential antecedent as before, he will expect the same consequent as before—even though he should never meet with an antecedent compassed about with the same accessaries. The next watchmaker may differ from any he had ever before seen, in a multitude of particulars—in age, in stature, in dress, and general appearance, and a thousand other modifications which it were endless to specify. Yet how manifestly absurd to look for another consequent than a watch because of these accidental variations. It is not to any of these that the watch is a consequent at all. It is solely to a purposing mind, possessed of competent skill and power—and this was common both to the first

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and the second watchmaker. The next time that we shall see a watchmaker addressing himself to his specific and professional object, there is little probability that we shall see in him the very same assemblage of circumstantials that we ever witnessed before in any other individual of his order. And yet how absurd to say that we are now looking to a different antecedent from any that we ever before had the observation of—that, just as Hume calls the world a singular effect, we are now beholding in this new watchmaker the operation of a singular cause—and that therefore it is impossible to predict what sort of consequent it may be, that will come out of his hands. It is true that there are many circumstantial things in and about the man which, if we admit as parts of the antecedent, will make up altogether a singular antecedent. But in the strict essential antecedent there is no singularity. There is a purposing mind resolved on the manufacture of a watch, and endowed with a sufficient capacity for the achievement of its object. This is what we behold now, and what we have beheld formerly—and so, in spite of the alleged, and indeed the actual singularity of the whole compound assemblage, we look for the very same consequent as before.

22. What is true of the antecedent is true also of the consequent. There may be an indefinite number of accessary and accidental things, associated with that which is strictly and properly the posterior term of the sequence. In a watch it is the adaptation of rightly shapen parts to a distinctly noticeable end, the indication of time—

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which forms the true consequent to the thought and agency of a purposing mind in the watchmaker. But in this said watch there are a thousand collateral things which, rightly speaking, form no part of the essential consequent—though altogether they go to a composition different perhaps, in some respects, from any that was ever exemplified before; and therefore go to the construction of a singular watch. There is the colour of the materials, there is their precise weight and magnitude, there is the species of metal—each of these and of many other things apart from that one thing of form and arrangement, which indicates the work and contrivance of an artist. Were the things with their existing properties presented before me in a confused mass, the inference of a designing cause would instantly vanish. It is the arrangement of things, obviously fashioned and arranged for the measurement of time, that forms the sole consequent—a consequent which does not comprise all the other circumstantial peculiarities that we have now specified, but which rather lies enveloped in the midst of them. These circumstantial things, it is very possible, were never precisely so blended, as they are in the specimen before me. There never, it is most likely, was just such a colour, united with just such a weight, and with just such a magnitude, and with just such an exact order of parts in the machinery, as altogether obtain in the individual watch upon which I am now reasoning. When looked to, therefore, in this general and aggregate view, it may be denominated a singular effect. Yet who does not see

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that the inference of a designing cause is in no way spoiled by this? As a whole it may be singular —but there is that in it which is not singular. There is the collocation of parts which has been exemplified in all other watches; and on which alone the inference is founded, of an artist with skill to devise and power to execute, having been the producer of it. It is this which the observer separately looks to, and singles out, as it were, from all the collateral things which enter into the assemblage that is before his eyes. In the effect, the strict and proper consequent is the adjustment and adaptation of parts for an obvious end. In the cause, the strict and proper antecedent is a designing intelligence, wherewith there may at the same time be associated a thousand peculiarities of person, and voice, and manner, to him unknown —but to him of no importance to be known, for the purpose of establishing the sequence between a purposing mind which is not seen, and the piece of mechanism which is seen.

23. But ere we can bring this reasoning to bear on the Atheism of Hume—there is still a farther abstraction to be made. Hitherto we separated the essential consequent from the accessaries in a watch—so that though each watch may be singular in respect of all its accessaries taken together—yet all the watches have in common that essential consequent from which we infer the agency of design in the construction of them. That consequent is adaptation of parts for the specific end which the mechanism serves—that is, the measurement of time. But it should be further understood

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that, for the purpose of inferring design, it is not necessary that the end of the arrangement in question should be some certain and specific end. It is enough to substantiate the inference that the arrangement should be obviously conducive to some end—to any end. From what the end particularly is, we learn what the particular object was which the artist had in view—but for the purpose of warranting the general inference that there was an artist who had a something in view, it matters not what the end particularly is. It is enough that it be some end or other—and that, an end which the structure or working of the machine itself obviously announces. In the case of a watch the following are the counterpart terms of the sequence. The consequent is a mechanism adapted for the *measurement of time.* And its counterpart antecedent is an intelligent adaptation, putting forth his ability and skill on the production of a mechanism for the *measurement of time.* But though we should lop off, as it were, the measurement of time or this specific end from each of these terms; and substitute in its stead an end generally, or a whatever end, the inference of an intelligent adaptation would still hold good. The consequent then would be a mechanism adapted for a *whatever end* (and that an end to be learned from the examination of the mechanism itself); and its counterpart antecedent would be an intelligent adaptation for *that whatever end.* For either the more special or the more general inference, we equally arrive at an intelligent adaptation. When we in the consequent restrict our attention to what the end

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particularly is, then we proportionally restrict the antecedent to an intelligent mind bent on the accomplishment of that specific end. But when in the argument we make but a general recognition in the consequent of some end or other, the conclusion is equally general of an intelligent mind bent on the accomplishment of that some end or other. All this might be provided for in the reasoning, by laying proper stress on the distinction between the adaptation of parts for *the* end, and the adaptation of parts for *an* end. The latter, in fact, is the only essential consequent to the antecedent of a purposing mind—and from the appearance of the latter we are entitled to infer this antecedent. By taking this distinction along with us, we come to perceive how far the argument of final causes may be legitimately extended.

24. We already understand then how on having seen one watch made, we are entitled to infer a maker for the second watch—though in many of its accessaries it may differ most widely, and therefore differ most widely on the whole or as a compound assemblage from the first. With all these contingent variations in the two machines, there is one thing which they have in common—adaptation of parts for the end of measuring and indicating time; and this justifies the inference of a common antecedent—even a purposing mind that had this specific object in view. But we contend that, in all sound logic, we are warranted to extend the inference farther—not merely to a second watch but to a second machine of any sort, though its use or the end of its construction was wholly different

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from that of a watch. If, for example, instead of a mechanism which served to mark a succession of hours, there were presented a mechanism which served to evolve a succession of musical harmonies, we should just as confidently infer an intelligent artist in the one case as in the other, although we had only seen the making of a watch, and never seen the making of an harmonicon. The truth is that it is not the particular end either of the one machine or the other, which leads to the inference of an intelligent maker—but the inference rests nakedly and essentially on this, that there is adaptation of parts for any end at all. Between one watch and another there is this common consequent—adaptation of parts for *the* end; and on this we ground the conclusion of there having been design and a designer in the fabrication of each of them. But between the watch and the musical apparatus there is also a common consequent—not adaptation of parts for *the* end, but still adaptation for *an* end; and on this we are equally warranted to ground the conclusion of design having been employed in the formation of each of them. The definite article is always comprehensive of the indefinite, so that whenever there is the end, there is always an end. But the indefinite is not also in the same way comprehensive of the definite, so that in the case of an adaptation having an end, it may not be the end which we have ever witnessed in the putting together of any former adaptation. Still it matters not. The inference, not of a mind purposing the specific thing for which we have formerly observed both a contrivance

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and a contriver, but still of a mind purposing something or a purposing mind, is as legitimate as ever. And so there lies enveloped in the watch this consequent—the adaptation of parts for *the* end—but there also lies enveloped there, the adaptation of parts for *an* end—and the latter we distinctly perceive to be in the music-box as well as in the time-piece. When we look to the latter machine we feel sensible that we never before witnessed the putting forth of intelligence in the adaptation of parts for *the* end. In this respect there is novelty, because we never before saw a machine made for the performance of tunes. But we at the same time are abundantly sensible, that whether in the example of a watch or of something else, we have a thousand times witnessed the putting forth of intelligence in the adaptation of parts for *an* end. In this respect there is no novelty; so that whether it be the watch that we have seen made or the music-box that we have not seen made, there is the same firm basis of a sure and multiplied experience on which to rest the conclusion of an Intelligent Maker for both.

25. And thus it is that we do not even require a special experience in watch-making to warrant the application of this argument from final causes either to this or to any other machines whatever. There may be a thousand distinct products of art and wisdom in which our observation has been restricted to the posterior, and has never reached to the prior term of the sequence—that is, where we have seen the product, and never either witnessed the production nor seen the producer—and yet we

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have a firm experimental basis on which to rest the inference, that a producer there was, and one too possessed of skill to devise and power to execute. The truth is that we every day of our lives, and perhaps every hour of each day, witness the adaptation of means to *an* end, in connexion with design and a designer—though never perhaps to *the* end in any instance of hundreds of distinct machines which could be specified—and which therefore, are in this respect to us singular effects. But still each of these machines has in it adaptation to *an* end, as well as adaptation to *the* end; has in it therefore that posterior term, of whose connexion with the prior term of an intelligent cause we have had daily observation. It is not, we should remark, on the adaptation to any object *quoad the* end—but on the adaptation to it *quoad an* end that the inference is grounded. It is thus that though introduced for the first time to the sight of a watch or a gun-lock or a cotton-mill or a steam-engine, we are as sure of intelligence having been engaged in the execution of each of them as if we had been present a thousand times at their fabrication. The truth is that we have been present many thousand times, though not at the process of formation in either of these individual pieces of mechanism, yet at other processes which have enough in common with the former ones to make an experimental argument in every way as good. We have had lessons every day of our life, by which to read what the characteristics be of those arrangements that indicate a mind acting for *a* purpose; though not a mind acting for *the* purpose.

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This matters not. The conclusion is as good the one way as the other—the valid conclusion, if we will but reflect upon it, not of a subtle but of a sound and substantial process of reasoning.

26. And if we can thus infer the agency of design in a watch-maker, though we never saw a watch made—we can on the very same ground infer the agency of design on the part of a world-maker, though we never saw a world made. We concede it to our adversaries, that, when reasoning from the posterior term or consequent to the prior term or antecedent of a sequence, both terms must have been seen by us in conjunction on former occasions—else we are not warranted to infer the one from the other of them. We are aware of the use which they make of this principle. They tell us that we cannot argue from a world to a God—because the world, if an effect, is a singular effect—that we have no experience in the making of worlds, as we may have in the making of watches—that had we seen a world made and a God employed about it, then on being presented with another world, we might have inferred the agency of a God in the creation of it—and this they contend to be the whole length to which our experience can carry us. But they overlook the distinction between what is essential in the consequent, and what is merely circumstantial therein; and it is here that the whole mistake lies. The essential consequent we have seen produced or we have seen in conjunction with its proper antecedent a thousand times—and thus it is, that we should confidently infer a designing artificer from the view

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of a watch, though we had just as little experience in the making of watches as we have in the making of worlds. We may never have seen a watch made—but in the watch before our eyes, we see the manifest adaptation of means to an end; and this we have frequently before witnessed, as the posterior term of a sequence, in connexion with the forth-putting of sagacity and skill on the part of a purposing mind, as its prior term. We have not seen the whole consequent named a watch produced by the whole antecedent named a watch-maker—but we have seen daily and familiarly that which is in the watch, adaptation of means to an end, produced by that which is in the watch-maker, a designing intellect. These two terms we have seen in constant conjunction in thousands of other instances; and we have therefore the warrant of a manifold experience for inferring that they were conjoined in this instance also. We carry the inference no farther than to the skill and power of the artificer. It is this part and this only, that we make the antecedent to the observed consequent before us. We may have never seen a watch-maker in contact with a watch—but we have often seen the effort and skill of a designing mind in contact with the adaptation of useful and subservient means. This has been a frequently observed sequence, from either term of which we may infer the other. Now the consequent of this sequence, the adaptation of useful and subservient means, lies enveloped in the watch; and we infer that the antecedent in this sequence, the effect and skill of a designing mind, lies enveloped in a watch-maker

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—so that though we should never have seen a watch made, and never seen a watch-maker employed in the formation of one, though we should never have had this particular experience, yet we have had experience enough to infer from the mechanism thereof the wisdom that presided over the fabrication.

27. In the case of God and the world we have only one term of the sequence before us. We see the world—but we have never seen God; and far less have we ever seen Him employed in the formation of a world. We never saw the whole consequent, a world actually emanated and brought forth by the whole antecedent a God. But both in the mechanism of the world, and in the innumerable products wherewith it teems, do we see the adaptation of means to desirable ends—and this we have seen emanated and brought forth in many hundreds of instances by a purposing mind as its strict and proper antecedent. It is thus that we hold ourselves to be abundantly schooled, and that too on the basis not of a partial but of a full experience, for the inference of a God. We carry the argument upward from the adaptations in nature to a contriving intellect; just because we have often witnessed similar adaptations, and witnessed them too in conjunction with an antecedent wisdom that planned and that performed them. It is because we have had manifold observation, and observation inclusive of both terms of the sequence, that from the one term in the present instance even the adaptations which nature offers to our view, we infer the other term even a design-

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ing mind, at whose will and by whose power and wisdom they have been effectuated. We have never seen a whole nature ordered into being—and which therefore in its entireness and totality may be denominated to us a singular effect—just as on the first sight of a watch, the watch regarded as a whole is to us a singular effect. But neither with the one nor the other is there any singularity in the essential consequent. The singularity lies only in certain circumstantials which have properly no part in the reasoning, and which for the proof of an antecedent wisdom in either case may be dismissed from the sequences altogether. In that which the mind strictly bears regard to in this argument there is no singularity. We have seen a multitude of times over that which is in the watch, accommodation of parts to a desirable end —and whenever we had the opportunity of perceiving also the antecedent term, there was uniformly the mind of one who devised and purposed the end—and so, on the principle which gives truth to all our reasoning from experience, we infer the agency of such a mind in the formation of a watch, though it be a formation that we never witnessed. And the same of this world, though we never saw the formation of a world. Our present state gives us to see the posterior term—even all of creation that is visibly before us. Our past history hath not given us the opportunity of seeing the creation itself or of seeing the anterior term, even that agency by which it was effected. But in the course of our experience we have seen adaptations innumerable conjoined with a prior

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agency that in every instance was the agency of a scheming and a skilful intellect—and just as not from the watch but from the adaptations in it, so not from the world but from the adaptations in it, do we on the basis of an accumulated experience, reaching to both terms of many an actually observed sequence, infer the existence of a world-maker, who contemplated and devised the various ends for which we behold so manifest a subserviency of parts in the universe around us.

28. After all then the economy of atheism would be a very strange one. We are led by the constitution of our minds to count at all times on the uniformity of nature—and it is an expectation that never deceives us. We are led to anticipate the same consequents from the same antecedents, or to infer the same antecedents from the same consequents—and we find an invariable harmony between the external truth of things and this inward trust of our own bosoms. Within the limits of sensible observation we experience no disappointment—and from such an adaptation of the mental to the material, we should not only argue for the existence of an intelligent Designer, but should hold it to be at once an indication of His benevolence, and His truth that He so ordered the succession of all objects and events, as to make of it an universal fulfilment to the universal conviction which Himself had implanted in every human bosom. It were strange indeed if this lesson of nature's invariableness which is so oft repeated, and which within the compass of visible nature has never been found to deceive us, should only serve

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to land us in one great deception when we come to reason from nature to nature's God—or that in making that upward step which connects the universe with its originating cause, there should for once and at this great transition be the disruption of that principle whereof the whole universe, as far as we can witness or observe, affords so glorious a verification. Throughout all the phenomena in creation we find no exception to the constancy or the uniformity of sequences—and it were truly marvellous if the great phenomenon of creation itself, offered the only exception to a law, which, throughout all her diversities and details, she so widely exemplifies—or if, while in every instance along the world's history of a produced adaptation we find that there have been contrivance and a contriver, the world itself with all the vast and varied adaptations which abound in it, instead of one great contrivance, is either the product of blind necessity, or some random evolution of unconscious elements that had no sovereign mind either to create or to control them.

29. And here we may observe that the very abstraction which we find to be necessary for the vindication of our cause from the sceptical argument of Mr. Hume, is that, too, on which we might found one of the proper refinements of a rational Theism. To preserve our argument, we had to detach all the accessaries from that which is common to the works of nature and of art, and so to generalize the consequent into adaptation for *an* end. In like manner should we detach all that is but accessary from the authors of nature and art—

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and so generalize the antecedent into that which is common to both, even an intelligent and a purposing mind. When we thus limit our view to the strict and proper consequent, we are led to limit it in like manner to the strict and proper antecedent. All we are warranted to conclude of the antecedent in a deduction thus generalized and purified is that it is purely a mental one. This is the alone likeness between God and man to which the argument carries us. The gross imaginations of anthropomorphitism are done away by it—and the argument by which we thus establish the reality of a God, serves also to refine and rationalize our conceptions of Him.

30. It is thus then that we would meet the argument by Hume, of this world being a singular effect. We have already said that though unable to demonstrate a primitive creation of matter, we might have still abundant evidence of a God in the primitive collocation of its parts. And we now say that though unable to allege our own observation or presence at the original construction of any natural mechanism—though we never saw the hand of an artist employed in the placing and adaptation of parts for *the* end of any such mechanism—yet, beholding as we do every day from our infancy adaptations for *an* end, and that too in conjunction with an antecedent mind which devised them—we have really had experience enough on which to ground the inference of a living and intelligent God. On comparing a work of nature with a work of human art, we find a posterior term common to both—not adaptation for *the* end,

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because each has its own specific use, and the one use is distinct from the other—but adaptation for *an* end. It is on the strength of this similarity that we can carry the inference of a designing cause from the seen to the unseen in specimens of human handiwork; and, by a stepping-stone in every way as sure, from the seen handiwork of man to the unseen handiwork of God. In each we behold not subserviency to the same end, but subserviency to *an* end—and on this generality in the consequent of each, we infer for each an antecedent of like generality—a mind of commensurate wisdom to devise, and of commensurate power to execute, either of the structures that are placed before our eyes. It is not brute matter in lumpish and misshapen masses that indicates a deity. It is matter in a state of orderly arrangement as in the great apparatus of the heavens; or matter more finely and completely organized, as in the exquisite structures of the animal and vegetable kingdom. It is true we never saw such pieces of workmanship made—but we have seen other pieces made dissimilar to these only in *the* end of their fabrication, yet like unto these in subserviency to *an* end—dissimilar therefore in that which is not essential to our argument, but similar in that which is fully sufficient for our argument. It is precisely in the oversight of this distinction that the fallacy of the atheistical reasoning lies. The singularity that has been charged upon the world belongs to certain circumstantial things which have really no place in the premises of our argument, and are therefore not indispensable to the conclusion. In

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the essential premises there is no singularity. The formation of the whole world is like to nothing that we have ever witnessed—but in the formation of all that in the world holds out to us the lesson of a Divinity, there is likeness to that which we have often witnessed. We have, times and ways without number, had experience of both terms in the adaptation of parts to *an* end. It is on this experience—the experience of a completed sequence, that reason founds her conclusions. We never with the eye of sense have perceived the actual emanation of a creature from the fiat of its Creator. But we have often seen the succession between the working of a mind, and its workmanship, in a piece of fashioned and adjusted materialism. And therefore it is that the thousand goodly complications which be on the face of our world—the trees, and the flowers, and the insects, and the feathered birds, and the quadrupeds that browse upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea whose peculiar habitudes fit them for peopling that else desolate waste of mighty waters; and lastly, amidst this general fulness both of animal and vegetable life, erect and intelligent man, curiously furnished in body and in mind, with aptitudes to all the objects of external nature, and which turn into a theatre of busy interest and enjoyment the crowded and the glowing scene over which he expatiates—therefore it is, we say, that all bears so legibly the impress of a governing spirit, that all speaks in reason's ear so loudly of a God.

31. By this reasoning we avoid the necessity of recurring to a new principle in order to repel or

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ward off an assault of infidelity—an expedient, which, unless the principle be very obvious in itself, gives an exceeding frailty to the argument, and causes it to be received with distrust. Perhaps the tendency both of Reid and Stuart, was to an excessive multiplication of the original laws in our mental constitution, which they all the more readily indulged, as it savoured so much of that unshrinking Baconian philosophy, from the application of which to the science of mind, they augured so sanguinely—and in virtue of which, unseduced by the love of simplicity, they would take their lesson as to the number of ultimate facts whether in the world of mind or matter from observation alone. Now it is well to acquiesce in every phenomenon, like that of magnetism, as if it were a distinct and ultimate principle of which no further account can meanwhile be given—so long as it withstands all the attempts of analysis to resolve it into another phenomenon of a more general and comprehensive quality. But this is very different from a gratuitous multiplication of first principles, and more especially from the confident affirmation of one before unheard of till framed for the accomplishment of a special service. It appears to be a resting of the theistical argument on a very precarious foundation, when the inference of design from its effects, is made a principle *sui generis*—instead of making it what it really is one case out of the many, where by a principle more comprehensive, we, on the recurrence of the same consequent as before, infer the same antecedent as before. We deprecate the introduction of such

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an auxiliary as calculated to give a mystical and arbitrary character to the Philosophy of Religion; and hold it a far better offering to the cause, when it is palpably made to rest on no other principles than those which are recognised and read of all men.

CHAPTER V.

On the Hypothesis that the World is Eternal.

1. But after all it may be asked, Is the world an effect? May it not have lasted for ever—and might not the whole train of its present sequences have gone on in perpetual and unvaried order from all eternity? In our reasoning upon antecedents and consequents, we have presumed that the world is a consequent. Could we be sure of this, it may be thought—then on the principle of our last chapter, let the adaptation of its parts to so many thousand desirable objects be referred, and on the basis of a multiplied experience too, to a designing cause as its strict and proper antecedent. But how do we know the world to be a consequent at all? Is there any greater absurdity in supposing it to have existed as it now is, at any specified point of time throughout the millions of ages that are past, than that it should so exist at this moment? Does what we suppose might have been then, imply any greater absurdity, than what we actually see to be at present? Now might not

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the same question he carried back to any point or period of duration however remote—or, in other words, might not we dispense with a beginning for the world altogether? Such a consequent as our world, if consequent it really be, would require, it might be admitted, a designing cause or its antecedent. But why recur to the imagination of its being a consequent at all? Why not take for granted the eternity of its being, instead of supposing it the product of another, and then taking for granted the eternity of his being? And, after all, it may be thought, that the eternity of our world is but one gratuitous imagination instead of two—and, as to the difficulty of conceiving, this is a difficulty which we are not freed from by the theory of a God. Can we any more comprehend His past eternity, than we can the past eternity of matter—the everlasting processes of thought any more than the everlasting processes of a material economy—a circulation of feeling and sentiment and purpose and effect that never had commencement in an aboriginal mind; than a circulation of planets, or that orb of revolution which is described by water through the elements of air and earth and ocean, or finally the series of animal and vegetable generations, never having had commencement in an aboriginal mundane system. At this rate, the supposition of an intelligent Creator may only be a shifting of the difficulty, from an eternal Nature to an eternal Author of Nature. If Nature is clearly made out to be a consequent, then it might be admitted, that the adaptations which abound in it point to an intelligent and

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designing cause. But this remains to be proved; and till this is done, it is contended, that it is just as well to repose in the imagination of Eternal Harmonies in a Universe, as of Eternal Harmonies in the mind of One who framed it.

2. On this subject we have nothing to quote from Mirabaud, whose work on the System of Nature—though characterized more by its magniloquence than its magnificence, its plausibility than its power—is fitted by its gorgeous generalizations on nature and truth and the universe, to make tremendous impression on the unpractised reader. There is a certain phraseology which has on some minds the effect of a sublime and seducing eloquence, while it excites in others a sensation of utter distaste as if absolutely oversatiated with vapidity and verbiage. This work is one of the products of Germany; and for upwards of fifty years has been well known in the Continent of Europe. Its circulation has been much extended of late by the infidel press of our own country—where it is, we understand, working mischief among the half-enlightened classes of British society. We know nothing of the history of its author. In real strength and staple of thought he is a mere sentimental weakling when compared with Hume, from whose Dialogues on Natural Religion we shall give one or two extracts on the argument now in question.

3. "For aught we can know *a priori*, matter may contain the source or spring of order originally within itself as well as mind does; and there is no more difficulty in conceiving that the several ele-

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ments from an internal unknown cause may fall into the most exquisite arrangement, than to conceive that their ideas in the great universal mind from a like internal unknown cause fall into that arrangement. The equal possibility of both these suppositions is allowed." Again—"If the material world rests upon a similar ideal world, this ideal world must rest upon some other; and so on without end. It were better therefore never to look beyond the present material world. By supposing it to contain the principle of its order within itself, we really assert it to be God; and the sooner we arrive at that divine Being so much the better. When you go one step beyond the mundane system, you only excite an inquisitive humour, which it is impossible ever to satisfy. To say that the different ideas which compose the reason of the Supreme fall into order of themselves and by their own nature, is really to talk without any precise meaning. If it has a meaning, I would fain know, why it is not as good sense to say, that the parts of the material world fall into order of themselves and by their own nature. Can the one opinion be intelligible while the other is not so?" Lastly—"An ideal system arranged of itself without a precedent design is not a whit more explicable than a material which attains its order in like manner; nor is there any more difficulty in the latter supposition than in the former." "A mental world or universe of ideas requires a cause as much, as does a material world or universe of objects; and if similar in its arrangement must require a similar cause."

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4. This is very distinctly put; and we think admits of as distinct and decisive a reply. The Atheist does not perceive why a material economy as exemplified in the world might not fall into order of itself, as well as a mental economy as exemplified in God. The precise difference between the two is, that we have had proof, as we shall attempt to show, of a commencement to our present material economy—we have had no such proof of a commencement to the mental economy which may have preceded it. There is room for the question, how came the material system of things into its present order?—because we have reason to believe that it has not subsisted in that order from eternity. There is no such room for the question, why might not the material have fallen into its present order of itself, as well as the mental that is conceived to have gone before it? We have no reason to believe that this mental economy ever was otherwise than it now is. The latter question presumes that the mental did fall into order of itself, or which is the same thing, that the Divinity had a commencement. In the material economy we have the vestiges before our eyes of its having had an origin, or in other words of its being a consequent—and we have furthermore the experience that in every instance which comes under full observation of a similar consequent, that is of a consequent which involved as the mundane order of things does so amply, the adaptation of parts to an end, the antecedent was a purposing mind which desired the end, and devised the means for its accomplishment. We

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might not have been called upon to make even a single ascent in the path of causation, had the world stood forth to view in the character or aspect of immutability. But instead of this, both history and observation tell of a definite commencement to the present order—or, in other words, they oblige us to regard this order as the posterior term of a sequence; and we, in reasoning on the prior term, just follow the lights of experience when we move upward from the world to an intelligent mind that ordained it. It is this which carries us backward one step from the world to God—and the reason why we do not continue the retrogression beyond God is, that we have not met with an indication of his having had a commencement. In the one case there is a beginning of the present material system forced upon our convictions; and we proceed on the solid ground of experience, when we infer that it begun in the devisings of an antecedent mind. In the other case, the case of the antecedent mind, there is no such beginning forced upon our convictions; and none therefore that we are called upon to account for. It is our part as far as in us lies to explain an ascertained difficulty; but not surely to explain an imagined one. We must have some reason for believing in the existence of a difficulty ere we are called upon to solve it. We have ample reason for regarding this world as a posterior term, and seeking after its antecedent. But we have no such reason for treating this antecedent as a posterior term, and seeking for its prior term in a higher antecedent. The one we see to be a changeable and

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a recent world. The other for aught we know may be an unchangeable and everlasting God. So that when the question is put—Why may not the material economy fall into order of itself, as well as the mental which we affirm to have caused it?—our reply is, that so far from this mental economy falling into order of itself, we have yet to learn that it ever had to fall into order at all. The one order, the material, we know, not to have been from everlasting. The other, the mental, which by all experience and analogy must have preceded the material, bears no symptom which we can discover, of its ever having required any remoter economy to call it into being.

5. At the same time we must admit that on this question between the eternity of matter and the eternity of mind, there has been advanced, on the Theistical side of the controversy, a deal of speculation and argument with which our understandings do not at all coalesce. We have already stated the reasons of our having no confidence in the *a priori* argument—although both Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Samuel Clarke were employed, we believe, in the construction of it. But besides this, there is a world of not very certain *metaphysique* we do think, about the necessity of mind to originate motion in the universe—and that were there nought but matter all space would be alike filled with it, and all would be inert and immoveable. We have already given one specimen of this gratuitous style of arguing from Wollaston—and without offering any more from other writers of that period, we may state that in the general we feel no sympathy

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of understanding with much which has been written on the side of Natural Religion. There appears for example to be nothing substantial or effective in that reasoning which is founded on the comparison between mind in the abstract and matter in the abstract—or which, on the bare existence of matter apart from its collocations, would conclude the necessity of an antecedent Intelligence to originate it into being. The palpable argument for a God as grounded on the phenomena of visible nature lies, not in the existence of matter, but in the arrangement of its parts—a firmer stepping-stone to the conclusion—than the mere entity of that which is corporeal is to the previous entity of that which is spiritual. To us it marks far more intelligibly the voice of a God, to have called forth the beauteous and beneficent order of our world from the womb of chaos, than to have called forth the substance of our world from the chambers of nonentity. We know that the voice of God called forth both. But it is one of those voices which sounds so audibly and distinctly in Reason's ear. Of the other we have been told, and we think needed to be told by Revelation.

6. The question to be resolved then is—not whether the matter of the world, but whether the present order of the world had a commencement?

7. Of the various reasons which might be alleged in favour of such a commencement, there are some that we would advance with much greater confidence than others. There is one by Dr. Paley which does not appear to us satisfactory—and in his statement of which, we think that for

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once he is metaphysically obscure. He, in his Natural Theology, brings it forward as a general position, that wherever we meet with an organic structure where there is the adaptation of complicated means to an end, the cause for its being must be found out of itself and apart from itself. This, at least, does not carry the instant assent of a proposition that announces at once its own evidence. Neither, although we think it a very impressive consideration, would we insist on the argument by which it is attempted to be proved, that although the existence of each organic being can be accounted for by derivation from a parent of its own likeness—yet we are not on that account to acquiesce in the imagination of an infinitude for the whole race, as if the line of successive generations reached backward to eternity. It does seem as irrational so to conclude, as to say of an iron chain which ascends perpendicularly from the surface of our earth, and at its higher extremity was too distant for vision, that each link was sustained by the one immediately above it, and that simply if the whole had no termination each would have a support of this kind and so the whole be supported. It seems as impossible that there should be an eternal race of men or animals, as that a chain rising infinitely upwards from our earth should hang upon nothing. If there be good reason for the belief, that there must be a suspending power for the whole chain at whatever height it may be conceived to go—there is at least the semblance of as good reason for the belief, that there must be a prime originating power for the

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whole race, however remote the antiquity of its origin. But even this consideration we at present shall forego—thinking as we do that the non-eternity of our animal and vegetable races rests upon a basis of proof certainly as firm as this, and greatly more palpable.

8. This proof is of two kinds. The recency of the present order of things—the recency of the world, meaning by this term not the matter in respect to being, which forms its substratum; but the dispositions of matter, more especially as exemplified in the structures of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, which form its existing economy*—the commencement of the world in this sense of it may be learned, either from the evidence of history or the evidence of observation. If there have been a creation, it belongs to the order of historical events, and like any other such event might become the subject of an historical testimony—the authority of which might be tried by the rules and decided by the judgment of ordinary criticism. In this respect there is no difference between these two facts—the origin of a world and the origin of a kingdom. They are alike susceptible of being made known by competent and contemporaneous witnesses, and of being transmitted downward on a pathway of oral or written tradition—the continuity of which and the credibility of which are alike cognizable, by the versant in that species of erudition. This evidence is distinct from that of direct and scientific observation, just as the

* The proper and original meaning in fact both of the Greek κοσμος and the Latin *mundus*.

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evidence of a record for some bygone event is distinct from that of our senses. We might have documentary information as to the precise year of the building of a house, or we might be satisfied by marks and appearances of which we have the immediate eyesight, that it was built within the last century. In like manner we might have evidence, if not for the precise year or century at which the present system of visible things was put together, at least for all that we are in quest of as connected with our present argument that it was put together at some time. The historical evidence for a commencement to the present order of the material world is all that we shall notice in this preliminary chapter—postponing our view of its observational evidence to the next book, when we treat of the proofs for the being of a God in the dispositions of matter.

9. There is one principle which should never be lost sight of, when investigating the Evidence of Religion, or indeed any evidence which relates to questions of fact. We mean the sound and sterling quality of that evidence which is either historical or experimental. The truth is, that the historical, when good and genuine, resolves itself into the experimental. The only difference is, that instead of our own observation, it substitutes the observation of others. We receive by our ears what we are assured by the diagnostics of credible testimony, that they have seen by their eyes. Historical evidence has thus the character; and, in proportion as it is substantiated, should have the effect of the observational. Originally, it is the evidence of

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sense—and no one can question the paramount authority of this evidence over all the plausibilities of speculation. It is a very obvious principle, although often forgotten in the pride and prejudice of controversy, that what has been seen by one pair of human eyes is of force to countervail all that has been reasoned or guessed at by a thousand human understandings. This is just the Baconian principle in science—and all we want is the scrupulous and faithful application of it to religion. In this we would have religion to make common cause with philosophy—and, in the formation of our creed, we should feel as little inclined as any of philosophy's most enlightened disciples to build an airy hypothesis on an unsubstantial foundation We no more want to devise or excogitate a system by any creative exercise of our own, than the most patient of those physical inquirers who question nature in their laboratories; and, upon a single adverse response, would dispost the theory of a whole millennium from its ascendancy over the schools. They seek for truth on the field of experiment alone; and, if not able to stand this ordeal, neither the beauty of an opinion nor the inveteracy of its long possession will save it from its overthrow. Such is the deference which they; and such also is the deference which we would render to the authority of observation. In every question of fact, it is all in all. It is so in the things of science—it is so in things of sacredness. We would look at both, not through the medium of imagination but of evidence—and that, whether we sit in judgment on a question of our own science,

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or on a question of geology—whether we investigate the past history and present state of the divine administration, or investigate the past physical history and actual state of our globe. In either, we should deem the real findings of one man to be of more value than the splendid fancies of a thousand men.

10. For example—in the latter science, we may have one doctrine on the degradation of the hills, and another on the encroachment or regress of the sea, and another on the relation between the position of the strata and the character of the fossil remains to be found in them. Of the last of these it is evident, that the results of theory must give way to the results of observation, should they stand opposed to each other; and in reference to the two first it is obvious, that there might be an evidence of history which should overbear the speculation. For instance had we the authentic memorials of a trigonometrical survey taken two thousand years back, and with the same securities for its correctness that we have in the surveys of the present day, who would not prefer the informations of such a document to all the plausibilities of all the speculatists? It were in the very spirit of our modern science to learn of the height of our mountains and the line and locality of our shores, from the men who had then measured rather than from the men who were now arguing them—and it is just a recognition of the great principle that all the philosophy of actual being in the universe, to be solidly established, must rest on the basis of facts—when we affirm that the doctrines of science

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want an indispensable prop, if they are not found to quadrate with the sure depositions of history.

11. It is thus, we think, that in the strict philosophy of the question, the geological speculations of our day should come under the tribunal, or be brought to the touchstone of authentic history. At a time when those physical characters are so confidently spoken of, which have been sculptured on rock, as it were, by the finger of nature, and wherewith she hath recorded the antiquity and revolutions of the globe; we are not to overlook those characters which have been transmitted to us from past ages on the vehicle of human testimony, deponing perhaps to the recency of our present world. We mean to affirm that if some credible and authentic memorial of history stands in the way of any theory, there is violence done to the philosophy of observation—when such an element is not disposed of, and perhaps not so much as adverted to. It is not a comprehensive view which is taken of the question, by those who run waywardly and unbridled on some track of speculation, and who blink any of the evidence that legitimately bears upon it. In questions of fact, history, when marked with the usual signatures of truth, is not only a competent, but in most instances is the best voucher that can be appealed to. If the Baconian logic require that one's own observation should give the law to his own fancy, it equally requires that the observation or the findings of one man should give law to the fancy of another. Now history is the vehicle on which are brought to us the observations of other men, whether the path

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over which it has travelled be a distance in space or a distance in time—that is, whether they whose observations it bears to us are the men of other countries, or of by-gone ages. History if not direct is at least derivative observation; and if rightly derived is only observation at a distance instead of observation on the spot. There is an end of all solid philosophy, if such evidence is set aside—and that, to make room for the mere wantonness of the human spirit, that would fain substitute its own creations in the place of all which observation distinctly points out, or which history audibly tells of the creation by God. At this rate the fair domain of science is again laid open, as in the days of the schoolmen, to the misrule, the wild vagaries of unchastened imagination.

12. Hence it is that in the exceeding dimness of reason or of nature's light, we do feel the utmost value for all those historical notices, which serve to indicate that the world had a beginning. Among the ambiguities of natural theism, and between the plausibilities which can be alleged on either side of this question—between an eternal universe whose laws and processes are now as they have ever been, and an eternal God who hath ordained these laws and still overrules these processes—there is no evidence that we should more desiderate than what may be called the observational. We should like the question to be rescued from the obscurity of *metaphysique*—and that the clear experimental light of authentic and credible history were shed over it. If from the documents and vestiges of other times, there could be collected even so much as the bare

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fact, that, somehow or other the world had a beginning, this would make room for the argument of its having begun in the devices of a mind that had an aim and a purpose in the formation of it. Let it in this way be made out that the world really is a consequent—and then from what we observe of this consequent we might reason to an antecedent—from the adaptations which abound in it to objects that are palpable, might we reason to a mind which designed such adaptations because it desired such objects—from the beauties and the benefits of its most orderly arrangement, might we reason to an Intelligent Being who had the Taste to conceive what is lovely, and the Benevolence to institute what is useful, and both the Power and the Wisdom to frame a mechanism which moved in such exquisite harmony, and wrought off so abundant a happiness to that host of sentient creatures who are on the surface of our Earth. Let there only be evidence, whether in nature or in history, by which to get quit of the hypothesis that this world with all its present laws and harmonies must be eternal—and then, on the stepping-stone of a world so beauteously ordered and so bountifully filled, might we rise to the sound hypothesis of an Eternal Mind from whom this universe is an emanation. This would give full introduction to the reasonings *a posteriori*—carrying us at once from the indications of design to a primary designer. All that is needed is satisfactory evidence that these indications are not from Eternity—that the curious mechanism, for example, of our bodies hath not always existed,

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and been transmitted downwards from one generation to another by a law which hath been everlastingly in operation—in a word that things have not continued to be as they are at present, we shall not say from the beginning of the Creation, for the fact of a Creation is that which we are now in quest of—but that they have not so been from Eternity.

13. But ere proceeding farther, there is still another principle which we would here interpose, in the shape of a lemma, on the general doctrine of the Evidences. Whatever strength there may be in the argument for the theology of revelation, it makes a clear addition to the argument for certain propositions in the theology of nature—such as the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul. Now, there is a certain habit or order of conception among the advocates of religion, which serves to throw a disguise over the real strength of the cause. We often, in the first place, read of Christianity as being based upon natural religion, as if it was on the preliminary establishment of the one that the other was founded. But, in the second place, it is held preposterous and illogical, to discuss the theism of nature on any other reasons than those which are furnished by the light of nature. Now, this habit of viewing the one as the foundation and the other as the superstructure—and at the same time of treating their evidences as wholly distinct and independent of each other, has had the effect, we should say, of unnecessarily weakening the defences of religion. What we contend for is, that it is logically a com-

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petent thing, to take, if we may so term it, of the cement which goes to consolidate the structure, and that for the purpose of giving firmness and solidity to the foundation. For example, whatever of evidence there might be for the authority of the Jewish Scriptures, we have a right to appropriate for the support of natural theology, in as far as its doctrines enter into the contents or informations of that volume. If, instead of a succession of Jewish, it had been an equally numerous and creditable succession of authors in any other nation, we should have made this use of them. Had there been a continuous chain of credible and well-supported testimony, passing upward through a series of approved and classical writers in Rome, and Greece, and Egypt—each reiterating from their predecessors a consistent testimony regarding a succession of patriarchs, and a flood in the early ages of the world, and a creation at the outset—their history would have been admitted to the proof, and been held as a most important witness in the question of a Deity. Now, what we contend is, that however insensible to the force and the value of it—this is a proof which we actually possess—and, by all sound criticism not the less valid or impressive, that it answers a double purpose—or that it makes at once for the leading truths of natural theology, and for the peculiarities both of the Jewish and the Christian faith. It is at all times competent for us to discuss the existence of God as a separate proposition—and to fetch from every quarter, where evidence can be found, all the

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arguments, whether of reason or of testimony, which can be brought to bear upon it. Though natural religion should be indeed the basis, and Christianity but the erection which springs from it —still it may so happen, that from one and the same source there might be extracted a material for the consolidation of both—and so the whole fabric of religion may suffer by our restricting ourselves to a partial instead of a full use of that material. If the testimonies we have for the recency of our world as now constituted, would have been so eagerly seized upon, in behalf of natural theism, had they come to us through the channel of secular or profane history—then, we are not to lose the service of them even as present auxiliaries to our cause, unless it can be shown to us in what way they have become impotent or worthless, by their having descended to us through the channel of sacred history. We thus hold, that in virtue of the artificial process by which the whole argument has been conducted, there has been created what we should call an artificial scarcity of argument for the doctrines of natural religion. For there is no real scarcity. On the firm and frequent stepping-stones of a sustained history, we may rise to the observational evidence of a creation and a Creator—but, by the general practice of our guides and conductors, we are kept at the present stage of our inquiries, from entering upon this path. The fact of creation is strictly an historical one, and is therefore susceptible of being proven by historical evidence, if such is to be

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found. And by all the signatures of valid or incorrupt testimony, we are directed to a place and a people, among whom the registers both of creation and providence were deposited. Yet on the existence of God, as a preliminary question, these leading credentials are kept out of sight—and we are presented instead, with but the secondary or shadowy reflections of them in the oral traditions of other places and other people, or the dying and distant echoes of nations that had been scattered abroad over the face of the world. It is thus that the fundamental demonstrations and doctrines in a course of theology are made to lack of that strength which rightfully belongs to them. We go in pursuit of dim or mythological allusions, to be found in heathen writers; and should we catch at some remote semblance of the Mosaic story, whether in the literature of Greeks or Hindoos, we rejoice over it as if a treasure more precious than all that we possess. Now, whatever semblance may be found there, the substance of this argument is to be found in the succession of Jewish and Christian writers. We ask no special indulgence for them. We should like them to be tested in the same way as all other authors; and, ere they are admitted as the chroniclers of past ages, to pass through the ordeal of the same criticism that they do. It is thus that we would trace by its successive landmarks, what may be called the great central stream of that history which stretches from the commencement of our existing world to the present day—and it is only thus that our minds can be adequately

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possessed with the richness and power of the historical evidences for a God.*

* Of the coincidences between profane authors and the Mosaic history, we have a very good precis in the 16th Section of the 1st Book of "Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion"—with a copious exemplification in the footnotes which are appended to it—tending to show that the most ancient tradition among all nations is exactly agreeable to the religion of Moses. In support of this he quotes from the remains of the Phœnician histories, from the accounts transmitted to us of the Indians and Egyptians, from the traditions preserved both in Greek and Latin and Jewish and Christian writers, of whom, from the stores of his vast and varied erudition, he presents us with many interesting specimens. The notices which he collects from these multifarious sources respect chiefly the chaos out of which our present system was formed, the framing of animals, the creation of man after the divine image and the dominion given to him over the creatures, the energy of the divine word in the production of all things, the priority of darkness to light, the infusion of life into all that is vital by the Spirit of God, the formation of man from the matter of the earth, the division of time into weeks, with the special honour rendered by various distinct nations to the seventh day. In further corroboration of the harmony between profane and sacred history, we are presented with allusions to the primitive nakedness of our race, to the innocence and simplicity and happiness of a golden age, to the history respecting Adam's fall and the great longevity of the patriarchs. To these must be added the almost universal tradition of a deluge—with many gleanings of ancient authorship about its minuter particulars, as the ark in which a few of our race were preserved and other species of animals, the place on which it rested, the sending forth from it of a dove and a raven. Besides these, resemblances can be traced between the current legends of various writers on the one hand, and on the other the scriptural narratives of the tower of Babel and the rite of circumcision, the histories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, the later scriptural narratives which respect Elijah, Elisha and Moses. It is well that in these shadowy reflections, there is none of that incongruity with sacred history which can affect the truth and authority of its informations. But when we consider the weight and number of the immediate testimonies that we possess in support of these informations, the continuity and strength of their evidence, the marks both internal and external which demonstrate the authenticity of the Bible, we cannot but regard it as a marvellous phenomenon, that inquirers should feel the satisfaction as of a stronger evidence in these hazy reflections of the truth, than when they view it in its own direct and primary radiance.

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14. We are far from meaning to insinuate that, beside the direct testimony of the sacred volumes, there are not other memorials of the world's recency which are worthy of our regard—such probabilities, even within the range of Nature's discernments of a recent Creation, or at least of a first (however remote) origin of Things as might serve to demonstrate that we live in the midst of a derived and not of an everlasting system; that many of the most exquisite structures which arrest the eye and the admiration of beholders are in the only important sense of the term consequents, and that no other antecedent can be found for them than the fiat of an intelligent Creator. There have many such vestiges been collected and appealed to, such as the recency of science—the limited range of our historical traditions, mounting upwards to only a few thousand years—the vast capacity of the species for general or collective improvement contrasted with the little progress which they have yet made, and which marks it is supposed but a comparatively modern origin to the human family—the expansive force of population, and yet its shortness still from the territory and resources of a globe, that could accommodate so many hundreds more of millions upon its surface.—These and several more taken chiefly from the history of nations, and the migration of tribes as indicated by the spread and the similarity of cognate languages, have been much insisted on for the purpose of building up an argument, and strengthening the barrier against the tide of a desolating Atheism. They are of some value,

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we admit. It is well that, if not very great or sensible confirmations of, they are at least in coincidence with the main narrative. They shed a fainter light on the question, but they show nothing opposite to what is shown by the light of the direct testimonies.

15. After all, they are the direct testimonies, handed down from one to another in the stream of Jewish and Christian Authors, which constitute the main strength and solidity of the historical argument for the historical fact of a Creation. There might be fitter occasions for entering into the detail of this Evidence—but we hold it not out of place to notice even at present the strong points of it. In tracing the course upwards from the present day, we arrive by a firm and continuous series of authors at that period, when not only the truth of the Christian story is guaranteed by thousands of dying martyrs—but when the Old Testament Scriptures, these repositories of the Jewish story, obtained a remarkable accession to their evidence, which abundantly compensates for their remoteness from our present age. We allude to the split that took place between two distinct and independent or, stronger still, two bitterly adverse bodies of witnesses at the outset of the Christian economy. The publicity of the New Testament miracles—the manifest sincerity of those who attested them as evinced by their cruel sufferings in the cause, not of opinions which they held to be true, but of facts which they perceived by their senses—the silence of inveterate and impassioned enemies most willing, if they could, to

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have transmitted the decisive refutation of them to modern times—these compose the main strength of the argument, for our later Scriptures. And then, beside the references in which they abound to the former Scriptures—and by which, in fact, they give the whole weight of their authority to the Old Testament—we have the superadded testimony of an entire nation, now ranged in zealous hostility against the Christian Faith, and bent upon its overthrow. They who are conversant in the practice, or who have reflected most on the Philosophy of Evidence, know well how to estimate the strength which lies in a concurrence of testimonies where collusion is impossible; and still more where one of the parties, inflamed with hatred and rivalship against the other, could almost choose to disgrace themselves for the sake of involving their adversaries in disgrace and discredit along with them. It is this which stamps a character and a credit on the archives of the Jewish history, whereof it were vain to seek another exemplification over again in the whole compass of erudition. These memorials of our race, which they had no interest in preserving—for, mainly, they were but the records of their own perversity and dishonour, had been handed down to them by uncontrolled tradition from former ages; and were now embodied in the universal faith of the people. And when the two great parties diverged however widely asunder in every other article of belief—they held a firm agreement in this, the perfect integrity of at least the historical Scriptures. Had there been a juggle here why did not an enraged priesthood stand forth

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to expose it—that along with it they might expose the weakness of that alleged prophecy which formed one great pillar of the Christian argument? How, in the fierce conflicts of this heated partizanship, did not the secret break out of an imposition on the credulity of mankind, if imposition there was?—and out of this fell warfare among the impostors who were for palming upon the world the miracles of the present or the memorials of the past, ought not that very effervescence to have arisen which would have swept the imposture of both religions from the face of the earth? It says every thing for the truth both of the Christian story and of the Hebrew records, that they survived this hurricane; and more especially that, ere the observances of the Mosaic ritual were done away, so strong a demonstration should have been given of the national faith in those documents by which the solemnities of the Jewish religion were incorporated with the facts of the Jewish history. The virtue of an institution like the Passover to authenticate the narrative in which it took its profest origin, and of which it is the standing memorial, has been ably expounded by Leslie and others. It is thus that we are carried upwards through a medium of historic light to the times of the Patriarchs—or even though we ascend not the ladder, but abide as it were at the bottom of it, we shall find in the Jews of the present day, the characteristics of a singular race which bespeak them to be a monument of old revelations. They have maintained their separate identity, as no other nation ever did, among the tempests and the fluctuations in which

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they have been cradled for two thousand years—and now stand before us as a living evidence of their past story—and an evidence along with it, that throughout the long succession of those fitful turmoils which have taken place in the wars and politics of our world for so many centuries—there has been indeed the controlling agency of a God mixed up with the history of human affairs.

16. Now the truth of the continuous narrative which forms the annals of this wondrous people would demonstrate a great deal more than what we at present are in quest of—that the world had a beginning—or rather that many of the world's present organizations had a beginning, and have not been perpetuated everlastingly from one generation to another by those laws of transmission which now prevail over the wide extent of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. We hold the Jewish Scriptures to be authentic memorials of this fact—and although we might afterwards find a better place for the contents both of the Jewish and Christian revelations—yet we cannot forbear, amid all that is imagined about the sufficiency of the natural argument, to offer our passing homage to these greater and lesser lights of our Moral Hemisphere, which have both of them together poured a flood of radiance over the field of Natural Religion, and so as to have manifested many objects there which would have been but dimly seen by the eye of Nature. Believing as we do that the surest of all philosophy is that which rests on the basis of well-accredited facts, in justice to our views on the strict science of the question, we

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must state the informations even of the Old Testament to be far more satisfying to ourselves than all the vaunted theorems of academic demonstration. There is a great reigning spirit by which the varied authorship of this book is so marked and harmonized—there is such a unity of design and contemplation in writings that lie scattered over the tract of many centuries—there is such a stately and consistent march from the first dawnings of this singular history, towards that great evolution in which the whole prophecy and priesthood of the consecrated land converged and terminated—there is withal such an air of simple and venerable greatness over this earlier record—such loftiness in its poetry—such obvious characters of truth and sanctity and moral earnestness throughout all its compositions, as superadd the strongest weight of internal testimony to the outward and historical evidence by which it is supported. This may afterwards be more distinctly unfolded—but we cannot even at this stage of our inquiries withhold all reference to a Book on whose aspect there sits the expression of most unfeigned honesty, and in whose disclosures we have lessons of the sublimest Theism.

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BOOK II.

PROOFS FOR THE BEING OF A GOD IN THE DISPOSITIONS OF MATTER.

CHAPTER I.

On the Distinction between the Laws of Matter and the Dispositions of Matter.

1. We have already adverted to the style of that argumentation which has been employed, for the purpose of demonstrating the creation of matter from the mere existence of it; and charged it with the same obscurity and want of obviousness which characterize the *a priori* reasoning. We do not perceive how on the observation of an unshapen mass, there can from its *being* alone, be drawn any clear or strong inference in favour of its non-eternity; or that simply because it now is, a time must have been when it was not. We cannot thus read in the entity of matter, a prior non-entity or an original commencement for it; and something more must be affirmed of matter than barely that it is, ere we can discern that either an artist's mind or an artist's hand has at all been concerned with it.

2. But more than this. This matter, whether an organized solid or a soft and yielding fluid

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congregated apparently at random in the receptacle which holds it, might exhibit a number of properties and manifest itself to be the subject of various laws, without announcing that either a creative power or an intelligent purpose had to do with the formation of it. For of what significancy is it towards any conclusion of this sort—that an isolated lump is possessed of hardness, or solidity, or weight; or that we can discern in it the law of cohesion, and the law of impulse, and the law of gravitation. These laws might all be detected in any one body, or they might be shared in common throughout an aggregate of bodies—scattered about in rude disorder; yet exhibiting no trace whatever of a first production at the mandate of any living potentate, or any subsequent distribution which bespoke a skilful and scheming intellect which presided over it. Matter must have had some properties to certify its existence to us, it being by its properties alone and not by any direct view of its naked substratum that we come to recognise it —so that, to learn of matter at all, it must have had some properties or other belonging to it. Now these properties might be conceived of variously, and all the actual laws of the material system might be discovered in a confused medley of things strewn around without any principle of arrangement—its chemical, and optical, and magnetic, and mechanical laws; and yet from the study of these, no argument might be drawn in favour of a God, who either called the matter into being, or endowed it with the attributes which we find it to possess.

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3. The main evidence, then, for a God, as far as this can be collected from visible nature, lies not in the existence of matter, neither in its laws, but in its *dispositions*. This distinction between the laws and the dispositions of matter has been overlooked by theists; or at least not been brought forward with sufficient prominency. Nevertheless it is essential, not only for the purpose of exhibiting the argument in its strength, but of protecting it from the sophistry of infidels.

4. It may be difficult to discriminate, or at least to characterize by a single word, what that is in matter apart from laws, which we would single out as affording the chief argument for a God. It is not enough to say that, in contradistinction to the properties of matter, we would appeal to the collocation of its parts. No doubt a very great proportion of the evidence that we are now seeking to demonstrate lies in the right placing of things, but not the whole of it; and this, therefore, is only a specimen of our meaning, without being the full and general exemplar of it. It is not from some matter being harder than others that we infer a God; but when we behold the harder placed where it is obviously the most effective for a beneficial end, as in the nails, and claws, and teeth of animals, in this we see evidence for a God. It is not the law of refraction in optics that manifests to us a designer; but there is a very striking manifestation of Him in the position of the lenses of the eye, and of the retina behind it—being such as to make the rays of light converge into that picture

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which is indispensable for the purposes of vision. It is not from the law alone of muscular contraction in animal substances that we argue for a God; but from the circumstance, that wherever a collection of fibres having this property is to be found in the complicated framework of a living creature, the moving force thereby established is always in conjunction with a something that is moveable, and with motions that subserve a useful end—insomuch that along with an apparatus of moving forces, we have a corresponding apparatus of parts to be moved; and furnished too, with the requisite joints or hinges—in other words, not the right powers only, but the right mechanics for giving operation and effect to the powers. Now, though these adaptations may all be quoted as adaptations of place, and therefore as instances of wise and beneficial collocation, it is not right placing alone which gives rise to all our beneficial adaptations. Things must be rightly shaped and rightly proportioned; and besides, looking to laws and forces alone, one can imagine that were all the other dispositions of our present actual economy to remain as they are, a mere change in the intensity of these forces would be the occasion of many grievous maladjustments—as a gravitation of ten times greater force towards the centre of the earth, with only the present powers of locomotion in those who inhabit the surface of it; or more intense affinities of cohesion in the various material substances within the use or reach of man; or an atmosphere and ether for the propagation of light, of different

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elasticity than what is now so exquisitely suited to our present susceptibilities of sound and vision.* These instances are enough to prove that the term collocation does not of itself suffice for expressing the distinction at which we now aim. A different centrifugal influence on each planet of our system might have given to each an elongated instead of a nearly circular orbit, and the benefits of such an orbit cannot therefore be referred to collocation alone. The term collocation, no doubt, might express by a single word that which in this argument is contrasted to "Law." But a better perhaps might be found. It certainly does not comprehend all which we wish to include in it as marking design at its first setting up. It is not the mere placing of the parts of matter which affords decisive indication of this, but of parts shaped and sized in the most beneficial way—beside being endowed with the very forces or motions that were the most suitable in the given circumstances. Beside the original placing of Jupiter and his satellites, we must advert in the argument for intelligence to the original direction and intensity of the motions which were communicated to them. Beside the situation of the parts in an anatomical mechanism, reference must be had both to the form and magnitude of the parts. Perhaps then, instead of the collocations, it were better, as more expressive of whatever in matter might be comprehended under the head of its

* Whewell, in the second chapter of the Introduction to his truly admirable Bridgewater Treatise, distinguishes both between the force of a law and its intensity or rate, which latter is an arbitrary magnitude.

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arbitrary arrangements, that we contrasted the dispositions of matter with its laws.

5. For the purpose, then, of viewing aright what that is, in which, nakedly and singly, the chief strength of the natural argument for a God lies—we should not only distinguish between the existence of matter and its dispositions, but also between the laws of matter and its dispositions. We have already said, that we detach an ingredient of weakness from the cause, when we give up that part of the argument which is founded on the bare existence of matter; and we at least bring out more prominently, because more separately, the main strength of the argument—when we discriminate between the evidence for a divine wisdom in the laws of matter, and the evidence for a divine wisdom in the disposition of its parts. If matter have existed from eternity, it must have had properties of some kind; and why not, it is asked, as well the actual properties which characterize it as any others? La Place, indeed, goes so far as to found an atheistical insinuation on the doctrines which he professes to demonstrate—that every virtue which radiates from a central point diminishes in intensity with the squares of the distances; and hence, if gravitation be a property at all, the actual law of gravitation is an essential property of matter. Now, it is not sufficiently adverted to, that we can even afford to give up the evidence as indicated singly by the laws, because of the overpassing evidence which is indicated by the collocations of matter. Laws of themselves would announce nought whatever of the hand or mind of an

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artificer. The truth is, that with laws and without collocations or dispositions, we should still have but a heaving, turbid, disorderly chaos—whereas it is by the collocations as adapted to the laws that the only decisive indications of counsel or contrivance are given. We can imagine all the present and existing laws of matter to be in full operation; and yet, just for the want of a right local disposition of parts, the universe might be that wild undigested medley of things, in which no one trace or character of a designing architect was at all discernible. Bodies may have gravitated from all eternity through the wide expanse of nature, as they do now. Light may have diffused itself by emanation from various sources with its present velocity. Fluids may have commixed with solids; and each class of substances have had the very properties which they possess at this moment. All the forces whether of mechanics or of chemistry, or even of physiology, might have been inherent in the various substances of nature; and yet in the random play of all these physical energies, nothing still but a chaos might have emerged, that gave no indication whatever of a presiding Mind, which directed the principles and the processes of this immense universe, to any one end or object that mind can be conceived as set upon. A headlong gravitation might have amalgamated all the matter of the universe into one mass. And what of this matter was in a liquid or aerial form, might have buoyed all the lighter substances to the exterior of this rude mundane system. And motion might have been excited by

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those inequalities of temperature which the ceaseless operations of chemistry give rise to. And this motion, whether communicated by impulse or withstood by resistance, might have ever and anon been renewed by the partial action of the evolved heat on the susceptible fluids of that turbid and ever heaving mass which constituted the whole Universe—and thus a perpetual vortex of movements might have been kept up, all under the guidance of those very laws which it is the object of our existing Philosophy to ascertain. There might have been the rotation of a vast unweildy sphere; and the coherence of its parts by attraction; and the play of various activities among the particles of the mass; and even such vegetative or animate tendencies as, with a right assortment of the substances in which they reside, might have given birth to the two great families of the great Physiological kingdom, but, without such assortment, ever and anon fell short and were frustrated in the formation of a complete organic being. All this is conceivable with the present laws, just if without the present collocations. In truth, there is not one law of matter which now falls under the observation of inquirers that, if unaccompanied with such a collocation as shall suit the parts of matter to each other, might not have had place in the random and undirected turbulence of a chaos. The laws of matter uphold its movements—but they are its dispositions which guide the movements. They are the laws which carry forward the processes or evolutions of a framework. But it is collocation which made the framework. In

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other words design is not indicated by the mere properties of matter—but by a right placing of the parts of matter. One can imagine all the properties of matter to have existed before that the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and summoned the parts of matter into that order and harmony which are now before our eyes. Even then, in the void and formless abyss, it is conceivable that there might have been a harmoniousness in one set of bodies, and transparency in another, and opaque solidity in a third, and the tendency to crystallize or to run even into organic harmonies in a fourth—and light might have radiated from any quarter where it resided, and been reflected and refracted according to the very laws which characterize the optics of our present world; and yet, altogether instead of a world with the regularities which are exhibited by ours, there might have been nought but a wild and indescribable medley of things, with all the activities which abound in our present system, but without one indication of purpose or aim in any of its arrangements. And, confining ourselves to one example, the refraction of light in its passage from a rarer to a denser medium might have obtained in a chaos as well as in a world. The wisdom therefore that appears in the formation of an eye is not properly indicated by the law but by the adaptation of the parts of this organ to the law—not by the law or property of refraction, but by the situation of the refracting fluids, which so bend the rays that emanate from the points which be without, as that they should meet in points which are within.

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Neither does the law which connects vision with the formation of a picture composed of these points, of itself, indicate a purpose—but this purpose is instantly recognised in the situation of a retina spread out in the very place where all this refracted light is collected, and so furnishing the canvass as it were on which the indispensable picture might be received. The law of varying refraction by which the distance of the picture behind the pupil varies either with the convexity of the pupil or with the distance of the objects—it is not this which, of itself indicates the hand of Intelligence. But the decisive indication lies in the placing of those various muscles wherewith the organ is so curiously set—by some of which the pupil might be rounded or flattened, and by others of which the retina might be either placed nearer to the front of the eye or drawn back to a greater distance from it. The term *convenience* is equivalent to utility, and had its origin doubtless in this that utility results from the *coming together* of parts. And it is just the coming together of those parts which compose the mechanism of the eye that gives the impression of a fabricator's hand—and tells us how the eye was fashioned as it is and placed where it is for the purpose which it so distinctly serves.

6. In every work of human fabrication, they are the dispositions more especially the collocations, and the dispositions alone, which announce the design which appears to have been in the making of it. They form the sufficient, for they form in truth the sole indication, of the artist's mind that

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devised and the artist's hand that executed. We do not accredit him with the original formation of the materials—neither do we accredit him with the laws and properties of matter. He did not establish the properties of matter—he only took advantage of these properties by a right disposition of the parts of matter. He did not institute the laws—but he turns these laws to his purpose; and this purpose is indicated not by the laws, but by such a disposition of substantive and tangible things as places them in the way of the law's operation. The watch-maker did not give to the main-spring its elasticity—but he coiled it up, and so placed it in the barrel as to impress a rotatory direction thereupon. He did not give to matter its power of cohesion; but he availed himself of this power —when he connected the barrel by a chain with the fusee, and so communicated a circular movement to the latter. He did not give its property to the lever—but there must have been a maker who had this property in his eye, when by means of a train of wheel-work, he placed a succession of revolving levers between the moving force and the balance-wheel which communicates a certain regulated pace to the handles of the dial-plate. He did not give to glass its transparency—but he made use of this its property, when he employed it as a covering, which might protect the dial-plate without concealing it. The design is not indicated by any one of the laws—but by such a collocation of pieces as made these laws conspire to the accomplishment of some palpable end. All the parts of this beautiful machinery, if misshapen and disjointed

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from each other, might be huddled together into a little chaos—and on the examination of each there might be detected all the principles which give movement and efficacy to the mechanism of the time-piece—but the design is gathered purely from the arrangement of the materials. It is because of an elastic spring being there; and a fusee connected with it by a chain being here; and because the varying diameters of this cone are so accommodated to the variations in the elastic force of the spring, as to make it equalize the movement of the whole; and because, placed in the very order that favours the operation of so many different laws, there are the wheels with their teeth lapping into each other, and the regulator, and the vibrating balance, and the indices on the outer face, and the glass that protects and yet keeps it visible—in a word, it is not because of things being endowed with given properties, but because of things being so put together as that these properties are made to be useful, that we infer contrivance in the watch. The properties might all have been detected in the medley of its rude and unfashioned materials. But it is because of a shape and distribution that evolved the properties towards some useful accomplishment—it is because of this, that we recognise a designer's hand in the whole fabrication. In short, it is adaptation and that alone which gives the impression of a designing cause—and to make this a complete and warrantable impression, we do not need to conceive of the designer that he either originated a substance or endowed it with properties. It is enough that he turned the substance

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and its properties to account by collocation. And what is true of a watch is true of a world. We do not need to demonstrate the non-eternity of matter. We do not need to involve ourselves in any question about the essential and the arbitrary properties of matter. We make our single appeal to its dispositions. It is in these that we behold the finger of a God—and in these that there is most unequivocal impress of the mind which presided over the formation of all things.

7. In the performances of human art, the argument for design that is grounded on the useful dispositions of matter, stands completely disentangled from the argument that is grounded on the useful laws of matter—for in every implement or piece of mechanism constructed by the hands of man, it is in the latter apart from the former, that the indications of contrivance wholly and exclusively lie. We do not accredit man with the establishment of any laws for matter—yet he leaves enough by which to trace the operations of his intelligence in the collocations of matter. He does not give to matter any of its properties; but he arranges it into parts—and by such arrangement alone, does he impress upon his workmanship the incontestable marks of design; not in that he has communicated any powers to matter, but in that he has intelligently availed himself of these powers, and directed them to an obviously beneficial result. The watchmaker did not give its elasticity to the main-spring, nor its regularity to the balance-wheel, nor its transparency to the glass, nor the momentum of its varying forces to the levers of his mechanism,—yet

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is the whole replete with the marks of intelligence notwithstanding, announcing throughout the hand of a maker who had an eye on all these properties, and assigned the right place and adjustment to each of them, in fashioning and bringing together the parts of an instrument for the measurement and indication of time. Now, the same distinction can be observed in all the specimens of natural mechanism. It is true that we accredit the author of these with the creation and laws of matter, as well as its dispositions; but this does not hinder its being in the latter and not in the former, where the manifestations of skill are most apparent, or where the chief argument for a divinity lies. The truth is, that mere laws, without collocations, would have afforded no security against a turbid and disorderly chaos. One can imagine of all the substantive things which enter into the composition of a watch, that they may have been huddled together, without shape, and without collocation, into a little chaos, or confused medley;—where, in full possession of all the properties which belong to the matter of the instrument, but without its dispositions, every evidence of skill would have been wholly obliterated. And it is even so with all the substantive things which enter into the composition of a world. Take but their forms and collocations away from them, and this goodly universe would instantly lapse into a heaving and disorderly chaos —yet without stripping matter of any of its properties or powers. There might still, though operating with random and undirected activity, be the laws of impulse, and gravitation, and magnet-

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ism, and temperature, and light, and the forces of chemistry, and even those physiological tendencies, which, however abortive in a state of primitive rudeness, or before the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, waited but a right distribution of the parts of matter, to develope into the full effect and establishment of animal and vegetable kingdoms. The thing wanted for the evolution of this chaos into an orderly and beneficial system is not the endowing of matter with right properties; but the forming of it into things of right shape and magnitude, and the marshalling of these into right places. This last alone would suffice for bringing harmony out of confusion; and, apart altogether from the first, or, without involving ourselves in the metaphysical obscurity of those questions which relate to the origination of matter and to the distinction between its arbitrary and essential properties, might we discern, in the mere arrangements of matter, the most obvious and decisive signatures of the artist hand which has been employed on it.

8. It is thus I imagine that we might clear away the obscurer from the distincter parts of the theistical argument. Laws without collocations would not exempt the universe from the anarchy of a chaos. All the existent laws of the actual universe would not do it—and, were the present collocations destroyed, we see nothing in the present laws which have even so much as a tendency to restore them. For example, let the human species be extinguished; and for aught we see, there is no force and no combination of forces in Nature which could replace the organic creature

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man, made up as he is of such curious and manifold collocations. Apart from the established line of derivation, we do not even see an abortive tendency towards the formation of any such distinct organic being whatever, whether animal or vegetable. So that if by any chance our race should be extinguished, then, unless by the fiat of a Creator, the surface of our globe would remain for ever desolated of all its rational generations. If we can demonstrate, then, whether from Nature or History, that there was a time when our human species was not—we should hold this to be a sure stepping-stone to the demonstration of a God.

9. The evidence for design in a workmanship of art is grounded exclusively on the shapes and collocations of things; and in no way presupposes either a creation of matter, or an infusion of its properties, on the part of the artificer. And the very same evidence we might have entire, in the workmanship of Nature—whatever the obscurities may be which rest on the eternity of matter, or on the essential and inseparable qualities which may be conceived to belong to it. We do not escape from this evidence by ascribing self-existence to body, and asking why its present properties might not have obtained from everlasting? There is still enough of evidence for an over-ruling mind, if the present arrangements be not from everlasting. When these arrangements commenced, there was a turning of the properties of matter by the new adaptation of its parts to the fulfilment of certain ends—and in this alone we have the same entire evidence for design, that we have in the fabrications

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of human intelligence. Grant that there may have been light from all eternity, and that there might also have been fluids which had the power of bending the direction of its rays. Still if ever a time was when man was not—we ask, how came the fluids to be so disposed in the pupil of the eye, and the retina to be placed at such a distance behind—as to make the pencils meet on that visual tablet, and there spread out a picture of nature for the information of the living occupier within? What brought the manifold muscles around this delicate and complex organ, and set each in that very position, and gave to each that very limit and path by which it could best add to the perfection of this instrument for the purposes of sight? It is not enough to say that the law by which the successions of the animal kingdom are upholden, is that in virtue of which each parent transmits its own likeness throughout all generations. We speak on the supposition of a first parent, a supposition that we shall endeavour to substantiate afterwards—and, in reference to him we would ask, not who established the laws of life and of nourishment and of sensation and of thought which make man what he is—but who brought such an innumerable assemblage of circumstances together, and by the adaptation of each to all the rest, upholds the living creature in the exercise of all his functions and all his faculties? Who so curiously organized him—and set him all over with so many fitnesses both of one part to another, and of all to the constitution of external things? Who gave him the lungs that could breathe in no other atmosphere—and the eyes that

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an intenser day-light than ours might have overborne into utter blindness—and the ears that either might have been insensible to the actual sounds of external nature, or on which these sounds would have inflicted the agony of a loudness that was intolerable—and the sensibility of touch that might under a random economy have been far too delicate for the rude exposures of this world's elements, or too obtuse for any intimation even from the rudest of their collisions? And how came such a complex anatomy into being, made up of more than ten thousand parts, the want of any one of which would bring discomfort or utter destruction on the creature who has been provided with it? The laws of nature can explain the succession of its events; but these laws do not inform us of the way, in which such an arrangement or such a collocation of many things has been brought about, as to make the working of these laws subserve an accomplishment, which, but for the adaptation of one part to another would have utterly been frustrated.

10. This difference between the Laws of Matter and the Dispositions of Matter, is one of great argumentative importance. In astronomy, for example, when attending to the mechanism of the planetary system, we should instance at most but two laws—the law of gravitation; and perhaps the law of perseverance, on the part of all bodies, whether in a state of rest or of motion, till interrupted by some external cause. But had we to state the dispositions of matter in the planetary system, we should instance a greater number of particulars. We should describe the arrangement

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of its various parts, whether in respect to situation, or magnitude, or figure—as the position of a large and luminous mass in the centre; and of the vastly smaller but opaque masses which circulated around it, but at such distances as not to interfere with each other; and of the still smaller secondary bodies which revolved about the planets: And we should include in this description the impulses in one direction, and nearly in one plane, given to the different moving bodies; and so regulated, as to secure the movement of each, in an orbit of small eccentricity. The dispositions of matter in the planetary system were fixed at the original setting up of the machine. The laws of matter were ordained for the working of the machine. The former, that is the dispositions, make up the frame-work, or what may be termed the apparatus of the system. The latter, that is the laws, uphold the performance of it.

11. Now the tendency of atheistical writers is to reason exclusively on the laws of matter, and to overlook its dispositions. Could all the beauties and benefits of the astronomical system be referred to the single law of gravitation, it would greatly reduce the strength of the argument for a designing cause. La Place, as if to fortify still more the atheism of such a speculation, endeavoured to demonstrate of this law—that, in respect of its being inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the centre, it is an essential property of matter. La Grange had previously established —that but for such a proportion, or by the deviation of a thousandth part from it, the planetary

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system would go into derangement—or, in other words, that the law, such as it is, was essential to the stability of the present mundane constitution. La Place would have accredited the law, the unconscious and unintelligent law, that thing according to him of blind necessity, with the whole of this noble and beautiful result—overlooking what La Grange held to be indispensable as concurring elements in his demonstration of it—certain dispositions along with the law—such as the movement of all the planets, first in one direction, second nearly in one plane, and then in nearly circular orbits. We are aware, that according to the discoveries, or rather perhaps to the guesses of some later analysts, the three last circumstances might be dispensed with; and yet notwithstanding, the planetary system, its errors still remaining periodical, would in virtue of the single law oscillate around a mean estate that should be indestructible and everlasting. Should this come to be a conclusively settled doctrine in the science, it will extenuate, we admit, the argument for a designing cause in the formation of a planetarium. But it will not annihilate that argument—for there do remain certain palpable utilities in the dispositions as well as laws of the planetary system, acknowledged by all the astronomers; such as the vastly superior weight and quantity of matter accumulated in its centre, and the local establishment there of that great fountain of light and heat from which the surrounding worlds receive throughout the whole of their course an equable dispensation. What a maladjustment would it have been, had the luminous

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and the opaque matter changed places in the firmament; or the planets, by the eccentricity of their orbits, been subject to such vicissitudes of temperature as would certainly, in our own at least, have entailed destruction both on the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

12. We hold that there is strong evidence for the commencement of our planetary system—though we shall not attempt to expound it at present—and the more, as there is a greatly overpassing evidence for the commencement of the organic systems in our animal and vegetable kingdoms, which are far more replete with the indications of design than is the mechanism of the heavens, as unfolded to us by astronomy. Let us therefore meanwhile assume a beginning for our solar system—and then, though we should not be able to disprove the eternity of matter, or that it had all the laws and properties which we now observe from everlasting—still these laws and properties though perfectly sufficient to account for the working of the planetary mechanism, are not sufficient to account for the original collocation of its parts. They may account for the operation of the machine, but not for the fabrication of it. If we have evidence for its being at one time set up, we are in the profoundest ignorance of any law by which it behoved to be set up according to its present arrangement. Why, for example, should all the luminous matter have been accumulated in the centre? Why should the fountain-head of light and of heat have been throned, as it were, in that place, whence it could emanate its gracious influ-

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ences with best advantage on those worlds, which by the weight of its superior attraction it could compel to a close attendance upon itself? Why, instead of this great central fire around which the planets move, and whence they receive through every part of their course an almost equable dispensation—might there not have been an opaque mass in the midst of that planetarium which now is lighted up so gorgeously; and wandering suns that, moving as comets do, might have scorched and left to freeze alternately the fixed and immoveable opaque in the midst of the firmament? And there are other adaptations—a rotation around every axis that affords a grateful succession of day and night—a progressive movement in space which along with the inclination of the axis to the plane of revolution leads on the seasons through the round of their beneficent journey—the satellites that reflect though they do not radiate, and cast their pale but useful lustre over the wintry and benighted regions of the worlds which they encompass—the distance at which the planets are kept from each other, and the free uncumbered amplitude which is thus left for moving without interruption, and without even any hurtful disturbance from their mutual gravitations. These are the few but still the contingent simplicities which might or might not have taken place—and on the actual concurrence of which, those worlds resemble our own in certain great characteristics, which we know are indispensable to the sustenance and the being of all its animated generations. We are aware of no force now in operation that could have carried

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out these planets to their respective distances from the sun—that could then, instead of simply leaving them to fall back into the mass of that great luminary, have projected them at about right angles to the line which lay between them—that could have directed the impulses so, as that in most instances, there should have been an axis with an angle of inclination to the plane of the orbit—that should have so tempered the velocity of the centrifugal motion as to have given to each a nearly circular path—that, in like manner, should have launched the satellites around their primaries, and thus have given rise to that beauteous and beneficent mechanism which the laws of nature might keep in action, but which no laws of nature that we have any access to could have framed or put together. To constitute a machine is one thing—to continue it in operation is another. The latter might be done in virtue of the properties of matter, and the former not be referrible to any one material agent within the compass of our knowledge. Although we should concede to Atheists, that the laws of matter had been long antecedent to the formation of the planetary system—yet formed as the system may have been in accommodation to these laws, there might, by the mere adjustment of its parts, (and an adjustment which no blind and unconscious forces that we at least know of could have given rise to,) to subserve some striking and palpable ends—there might be evidence in this goodly fabrication, of a purpose by an Artist's mind, and of an Artist's hand put forth on the execution of it.

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13. But whatever defect or doubtfulness of evidence there may be in the mechanism of the heavens—this is amply made up for in a more accessible mechanism near at hand. If either the dispositions of matter in the former mechanism be so few, or the demonstrable results of its single law be so independent of them, that the agency of design rather than of necessity or chance be less manifest than it otherwise would be in the astronomical system; nothing on the other hand can exceed the force and concentration of that proof, which is crowded to so marvellous a degree of enhancement within the limits of the anatomical system. It is this which enables us to draw so much weightier an argument for a God, from the construction of an eye than from the construction of a planetarium. And here it is quite palpable, that it is in the dispositions of matter more than in the laws of matter, where the main strength of the argument lies, though we hear much more of the wisdom of Nature's laws than of the wisdom of her collocations.* Now it is true that the law of refraction is indispensable to the faculty of vision;

* This distinction between the laws and the collocations of matter is overlooked by atheistical writers, as in the following specimen from the "Systême de la Nature" of Mirabaud. "These prejudiced dreamers," speaking of believers in a God, "are in an ecstasy at the sight of the periodical motion of the planets; at the order of the stars; at the various productions of the earth; at the astonishing harmony in the component parts of animals. In that moment, however, they forget the laws of motion; the power of gravitation; the forces of attraction and repulsion; they assign all these striking phenomena to unknown causes, of which they have no one substantive idea."

When Professor Robison felt alarmed by the attempted demonstration of La Place, that the law of gravitation was an essential

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but the laws indispensable to this result are greatly outnumbered by the dispositions which are indispensable to it—such as the rightly sized and shaped lenses of the eye; and the rightly placed retina spread out behind them, and at the precise distance where the indispensable picture of external nature might be formed, and presented as it were for the information of the occupier within; and then, the variety and proper situation of the numerous muscles, each entrusted with an important function, and all of them contributing to the power and perfection of this curious and manifoldly complicated organ. It is not so much the endowment of matter with certain properties, as the arrangement of it into certain parts, that bespeaks here the hand of an artist; and this will be found true of the anatomical structure in all its departments. It is not the mere chemical property of the gastric juice that impresses the belief of contrivance; but the presence of the gastric juice, in the very situation whence it comes forth to act with advantage on the food, when received into the stomach, and there submitted to a digestive process for the nourishment of the animal economy. It is well to distinguish these two things. If we but say of matter that it is furnished with such powers as make it subservient to many useful results, we

property of matter, lest the cause of natural theology should be endangered by it—he might have recollected that the main evidence for a Divinity lies not in the laws of matter, but in their collocations—because of the utter inadequacy in the existing laws to have originated the existing collocations of the material world. So that if ever a time was, when these collocations were not—there is no virtue in the laws that can account for their commencement, or that supersedes the fiat of a God.

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keep back the strongest and most unassailable part of the argument for a God. It is greatly more pertinent and convincing to say of matter, that it is distributed into such parts as to ensure a right direction and a beneficial application for its powers. It is not so much in the establishment of certain laws of matter that we can discern the aims or the purposes of intelligence, as in certain dispositions of matter, that put it in the way of being usefully operated upon by the laws. Insomuch, that though we conceded to the atheist the eternity of matter, and the essentially inherent character of all its laws—we could still point out to him, in the manifold adjustments of matter, its adjustments of place, and figure, and magnitude, the most impressive signatures of a Deity. And what a countless variety of such adjustments within the compass of an animal, or even a vegetable framework! In particular, what an amount and condensation of evidence for a God in the workmanship of the human body! What bright and convincing lessons of theology might man (would he but open his eyes) read on his own person—that microcosm of divine art, where as in the sentences of a perfect epitome, he might trace, in every lineament or member the finger and authorship of the Godhead!

14. It is thus that the evidence yielded by one department of nature for a God, differs so much in strength from that yielded by another. It varies with the number of independent circumstances which must meet together for the production of some given end. Should it require, for

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example, the concurrence of ten such circumstances to bring about a useful result, the argument for design founded on this concurrence has inconceivably greater force than when it requires only three or four. According to the doctrine of chances, the evidence should grow in a rapid multiple ratio with the increase in the number of those contingent things which enter into an arrangement, and are indispensable to the effect of it. It is precisely for this reason that anatomy is so much more prolific of argument for a God than astronomy. There is a vastly greater number of independent parts and relations in the anatomical system, than when viewed largely and generally, the only way in which it can be viewed by us, there is in the system of the heavens. There is a prodigiously more concentrated proof of contrivance within the little compass of an eye, than in the wide survey of an astronomer there is within the compass of the planetarium. Hence the more slender evidence for a God in the great movements of astronomy. The number of independent circumstances which meet together upon the arena of this wondrous science is comparatively small—A great body in the centre kept there by the one law of gravitation, which binds upon it the attendance of its revolving worlds—a single impulse upon each of these worlds to impress upon them both the projectile and the rotatory movements, though so regulated we admit as to secure a nearly circular orbit to them all—the inclination of the axis in most of them to the orbit of revolution, which could still have been impressed in dependence on the

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random spot where the first impulse was given—a similar treatment for each of the satellites, with this peculiarity in the comets, their being struck either with more unequal force in proportion to their distance from the sun, or in a more acute direction to the radius vector of their orbits. These make up as it were the few simple contingencies on the union of which the mechanism of our celestial economy was framed at the first, and is upholden afterwards. It is because so few, that there is more room for the supposition that their combination might have been fortuitous—and hence astronomy is not the best medium through which to prove the agency of an intelligent Creator—although in the language of Dr. Paley if this can be proved by other means, it shows beyond all other sciences the magnificence of His operations.

15. In the proportion that we lessen the number of contingent things which enter into any useful combination—we weaken the argument for its having originated in design, or in a designing cause. Had both the rotatory and the projectile motions of a planet required three impulses—that is, two equal and opposite forces to spin it round its axis, and then a progressive force to set it forward—this would have afforded all the stronger evidence for the hand of a God. But these two motions, as well as the inclination of the axis to the plane of the orbit, can all be ensured by one impulse in a direction oblique to the planet's surface. This in so far attenuates the argument for a divine agency having been concerned in the putting together of this marvellous framework. But

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it is worthy of remark that this same consideration which tends to reduce the strength of the evidence for a God, tends also to the demonstration of His greatness on the supposition of His existence being established on other grounds. This reduction of the progressive and rotatory movements to one impulse ushers the mind of the inquirer into larger views of the constitution of our universe. The sun is known to have a revolution round its own axis—and this, if not communicated by two equal and opposing forces that leave it stationary in space, would bespeak the application only of one force which must give it a progressive motion also. If, then, he be moving forward through immensity, he must carry the whole planetary system along with him, even as Jupiter does his secondary system of satellites around the sun. This points to the common centre of a higher system than ours, around which suns with their attendant planets are revolving. And whereas, we have been in the habit of looking to the revolution of our Georgium Sidus as the most magnificent sweep of which we had direct observation—this may be but a humble epicycle to that great circuit, in which all the suns of our universe with their attendant systems, are so many fellow-travellers on the scale of a higher astronomy.

16. The chief then, or at least the usual subject-matter of the argument, is the obvious adaptation wherewith creation teems, throughout all its borders, of means to a beneficial end. And it is manifest that the argument grows in strength with the number and complexity of these means. The

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greater the number of independent circumstances which must meet together for the production of a useful result—then, in the actual fact of their concurrence, is there less of probability for its being the effect of chance, and more of evidence for its being the effect of design. A beneficent combination of three independent elements is not so impressive or so strong an argument for a divinity, as a similar combination of six or ten such elements. And every mathematician, conversant in the doctrine of probabilities, knows how with every addition to the number of these elements, the argument grows in force and intensity, with a rapid and multiple augmentation—till at length, in some of the more intricate and manifold conjunctions, those more particularly having an organic character and structure, could we but trace them to an historical commencement, we should find, on the principles of computation alone, that the argument against their being fortuitous products, and for their being the products of a scheming and skilful artificer, was altogether overpowering.

17. We might apply this consideration to various departments in nature. In astronomy, the independent elements seem but few and simple, which must meet together for the composition of a planetarium. One uniform law of gravitation, with a force of projection impressed by one impulse on each of the bodies, could suffice to account for the revolutions of the planets round the sun, and of the satellites around their primaries, along with the diurnal revolution of each, and the varying

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inclinations of the axes to the planes of their respective orbits. Out of such few contingencies, the actual orrery of the heavens has been framed. But in anatomy, to fetch the opposite illustration from another science, what a complex and crowded combination of individual elements must first be effected, ere we obtain the composition of an eye, —for the completion of which mechanism, there must not only be a greater number of separate laws, as of refraction and muscular action and secretion; but a vastly greater number of separate and distinct parts, as the lenses, and the retina, and the optic nerve, and the eyelid and eyelashes, and the various muscles wherewith this delicate organ is so curiously beset, and each of which is indispensable to its perfection, or to the right performance of its functions. It is passing marvellous that we should have more intense evidence for a God in the construction of an eye, than in the construction of the mighty planetarium—or that, within less than the compass of a handbreadth, we should find in this lower world a more pregnant and legible inscription of the Divinity, than can be gathered from a broad and magnificent survey of the skies, lighted up though they be, with the glories and the wonders of astronomy.

18. But while nothing can be more obvious than that the proof for design in any of the natural formations, is the stronger, in proportion to the number of separate and independent elements which have been brought together, and each of which contributes essentially to its usefulness—we have long held it of prime importance to the

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theistical argument, that clear exhibition should be made of the distinction not generally adverted to, and which we have now attempted to expound, between Dispositions and Laws in the material world.

19. Our argument hitherto has been, that even though matter with all its properties had existed from eternity, there might still be room for the indication of a great master spirit being concerned in those existing arrangements of matter, by which its properties have been made subservient to certain ends which were desirable. We have no doubt that this overruling spirit hath both created the matter and established the properties—although the cause of theism can afford to give this up, and can find enough in the order and adaptation of things to prove that the hand of a Divinity has been there. There is less, we admit, of this evidence in the movements of astronomy—because of the very few distinct and independent elements which are concerned in them. Yet we cannot, in spite of the atheistical evasion which has been made from it, refrain from adverting to the actual law of gravitation as being inversely proportional to the squares of the distances. Laplace and others affirm it to be an essential property of matter, that every virtue which is propagated from a centre should diminish in intensity in this very proportion—and so would rob us of the argument for a God that may be founded on the contingency of this law. Nevertheless, seeing that we have such abundant evidence for a Divinity from other quarters, we will appropriate the honours of this

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law to the presiding intelligence who ordained it. It is the beautiful discovery of La Grange that this is the only law which is consistent with the permanency of the planetary system—that if the law of mutual attraction between its bodies had deviated by a thousandth part from that which actually obtains, the mutual disturbances which take place among the planets themselves would at length have deranged the whole economy of their movements—that the errors would have accumulated in one direction so as at length either to have brought the planets to the sun, or sent them to irreclaimable distances away from it—but that now the errors alternate between one direction and another—reaching to a maximum upon one side, which it never can exceed, and then oscillating back again so as to keep a little way to the right or the left of a certain mean state, which forms the invariable and indestructible average of a system that, under other laws of gravitation, would have contained within itself the principles of its own dissolution.

20. In virtue of the distinction between the laws of matter and its dispositions, we might perhaps release ourselves from a certain atheistical imagination which, without assuming the shape of a distinct principle, or coming forth in aught like a formal avowal, is apt to maintain its hold over the spirits and conceptions chiefly of physical inquirers. There is a mystery inscrutable in the creation of matter out of nothing—and, on the other hand, if it have existed from everlasting, why may it not, unchangeable in character as in being,

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have had the very properties from everlasting which are now exhibited before our eyes? And all the phenomena of this our material universe are held to be the evolution of these properties. Now, the distinction is here overlooked between the phenomena of successive nature, and the phenomena of contemporaneous nature, on which distinction Professor Robison of Edinburgh founded his definitions of natural philosophy and natural history —making it the office of the one to classify the resemblances which take place among the events of the material Universe; and of the other to classify the resemblances which take place among the objects of the material Universe. Conceive the eye to be open for an indivisible moment of time, and that at that moment all the senses of a living and perfectly intelligent observer were alive, to all the properties of all the things in external nature which were fitted to impress them—then the registration and orderly arrangement of all the properties, thus taken cognizance of on the instant form the business of the one science—which therefore, if completed, would make known to us the colour and the form, and the weight and the taste, and the sonorous and tangible qualities, and lastly, the structure or collocation among the parts of every thing that exists. But if, instead of one moment, we introduce the element of time into our observations of Nature, then we shall not fail to perceive incessant changes going on in all that is around us—and it is the business of these other sciences to record and to classify these changes. Now what we affirm is, that the powers of our

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existing natural philosophy have not given rise to the arrangements of our existing natural history —and that if these arrangements were destroyed, these powers are not able to replace them. They may account for the evolution of things or substances collocated in a certain way; but they did not originate the collocations—and if it can be demonstrated that ever a time was when certain mechanisms were not, that are now in full operation, or certain organic forces and combinations that now sustain the life and enjoyment of millions—then it is at the commencement of these that we require the fiat of a God; the interposition of a living and purposing agent who moulded the forms, and brought together the parts of the various goodly constructions which are now before our eyes.

21. This fine generalization of Robison, ranges all philosophy into two sciences—one the science of contemporaneous nature; the other, the science of successive nature. When the material world is viewed according to this distinction, the whole science of its contemporaneous phenomena is comprehended by him under the general name of Natural History, which takes cognizance of all those characters in external nature that exist together at the instant, and which may be described without reference to time—as smell, and colour, and size, and weight, and form, and relation of parts, whether of the simple inorganic or more complex organic structures. It is when the elements of time and motion are introduced, that we are presented with the phenomena of successive nature; and the science that embraces these is, in contradis-

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tinction to the former, termed Natural Philosophy. This latter science may be separated or subdivided further into natural philosophy, strictly and indeed usually so called, whose province it is to investigate those changes which take effect in bodies by motions that are sensible and measurable; and chemistry, or the science of those changes which take effect in bodies by motions which are not sensible or, at least, not measurable, and which cannot therefore be made the subjects of mathematical computation or reasoning. This last, again, is capable of being still further partitioned into the science which investigates the changes effected by means of insensible motion in all inorganic matter, or chemistry strictly and usually so called; and the science of physiology, whose province it is to investigate the like changes that take place in organic bodies, whether of the animal or vegetable kingdoms.

22. Or, the distinction between these two sciences of contemporaneous and successive nature may otherwise be stated thus. The one, or natural history, is conversant with objects—the other, or natural philosophy in its most comprehensive meaning, is conversant with events. It is obvious that the dispositions of matter come within the province of the former science—while the laws of matter, or the various moving forces by which it is actuated, fall more properly under the inquiries of the latter science. Now, adopting this nomenclature, we repeat it as a most important assertion for the cause of natural theology, that should all the present arrangements of our existing natural

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history be destroyed, there is no power in the laws of our existing natural philosophy to replace them. Or, in other words, if ever a time was, when the structure and dispositions of matter, under the present economy of things were not—there is no force known in nature, and no combination of forces that can account for their commencement. The laws of nature may keep up the working of the machinery—but they did not and could not set up the machine. The human species, for example, may be upholden, through an indefinite series of ages, by the established law of transmission—but were the species destroyed, there are no observed powers of nature by which it could again be originated. For the continuance of the system and of all its operations, we might imagine a sufficiency in the laws of nature; but it is the first construction of the system which so palpably calls for the intervention of an artificer, or demonstrates so powerfully the fiat and finger of a God.

23. This distinction between nature's laws and nature's collocations is mainly lost sight of in those speculations of geology, the object of which is to explain the formation of new systems emerging from the wreck of old ones. They proceed on the sufficiency of nature's laws for building up the present economy of things out of the ruins of a former economy, which the last great physical catastrophe on the face of our earth had overthrown. Now, in these ruins, viewed as materials for the architecture of a renovated world, there did reside all those forces, by which the processes of the existing economy are upholden; but the geolo-

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gists assign to them a function wholly distinct from this, when they labour to demonstrate that by laws, and laws alone, the framework of our existing economy was put together. It is thus that they would exclude the agency of a God from the transition between one system, or one formation, and another; although it be precisely at such transition when this agency seems most palpably and peculiarly called for. We feel assured that the necessity for a divine intervention, and, of course, the evidence of it would have been more manifest, had the distinction between the laws of matter and its collocations been more formally announced, or more fully proceeded on by the writers on natural theism. And yet it is a distinction that must have been present to the mind of our great Newton, who expressly affirms that a mechanism of wonderful structure could not arise by the mere laws of nature. In his third printed letter to Bentley, he says, that "the growth of *new systems* out of *old ones*, without the mediation of a divine power, seems to me apparently absurd;" and that "the system of nature was *set in order* in the beginning, with respect to size, figure, proportions, and properties, by the counsels of God's own intelligence."*

* Towards the end of the third book of Newton's Optics, we have the following very distinct testimony upon this subject: "For it became Him who created them to set them in order. And if he did so, it is unphilosophical to seek for any other origin of the world; or to pretend that it might arise out of a chaos by the mere laws of nature; though being once formed, it may continue by those laws for many ages."

This disposition to resolve the collocations into the laws of nature proves, in the expressive language of Granville Penn,

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24. One precious fruit of the recent geological discoveries may be gathered from the testimony which they afford to the destruction of so many terrestrial economies now gone by, and the substitution of the existing one in their place. If there be truth at all in the speculations of this science, there is nothing which appears to have been more conclusively established by them, than a definite origin or commencement for the present animal and vegetable races. Now we know what it is which upholds the whole of the physiological system that is now before our eyes,—even the successive derivation of each individual member from a parent of its own likeness; but we see no force in nature, and no complication of forces which can tell us what it was that originated the system. It is at this passage in the history of nature, where we meet with such pregnant evidence for the interposition of a designing cause,—an evidence, it will be seen, of prodigious density and force, when we compute the immense number and variety of those aptitudes, whether of form or magnitude or relative position, which enter into the completion of an organic structure. It is in the numerical superiority of the distinct collocations to the distinct laws of matter, that the superior evidence of the former lies. We do not deny that there is argument for a God in the number of beneficial, while, at the same time, distinct and independent laws wherewith matter is endowed.

how strenuously, not "physical science," but only some of its disciples have "laboured to exclude the *Creator* from the *details* of his own creation; straining every nerve of ingenuity to ascribe them *all* to *secondary causes*."

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We only affirm a million-fold intensity of argument in the indefinitely greater number of beneficial, and at the same time distinct and independent number of collocations whereinto matter has been arranged. In this respect the human body may be said to present a more close and crowded and multifarious inscription of the divinity, than any single object within the compass of visible nature. It is instinct throughout with the evidence of a builder's hand; and thus the appropriate men of science who can expound those dispositions of matter which constitute the anatomy of its frame-work, and which embrace the physiology of its various processes, are on secure and firm vantage-ground for an impressive demonstration. This we shall attempt to show more fully in our next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Natural and Geological Proofs for a Commencement of our present Terrestrial Economy.

1. THE historical argument which we have already attempted to unfold for the non-eternity of our present world, has been exposed to a certain collision with the speculations of those naturalists, who have founded their theories on the vestiges of certain revolutions which may have taken place in the state of our globe. It is not for the vindication of the Mosaic account that we now advert to this, but for the exposition of what we should

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term the Geological argument in behalf of a Deity. On this subject there are many, and these perhaps an increasing number, who think that there might be conceded to the geologists an indefinite antiquity for the matter of our globe—and that, without violation even to the strict literalities of the book of Genesis—not one of which, save when allowance is evidently to be made for the use of popular language, they would feel disposed to give up for any imaginations or reasonings which philosophy has yet set forth upon the subject. All, according to them, which can positively be gathered from the first chapter of that book is a great primary act of creation, at how remote a period is uncertain—after which our world may have been the theatre of many changes and successive economies, the traces or memorials of which might be observable at the present day. It leaves on the one hand abundant scope to those who are employed in the investigation of these memorials, if it be granted that the Mosaic narrative fixes, only the antiquity of our present races, and not the antiquity of the earth that is peopled by them. But on the other hand we should not tamper with the record by allegorizing any of its passages or phrases. We should not for example protract the six days into so many geological periods—as if by means of a lengthened natural process to veil over the fiat of a God, that phenomenon, if we may so term it, which of all others seems the most offensive to the taste of some philosophers, and which they are most anxious to get rid of. We hold the week of the first chapter of Genesis to have been literally

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a week of miracles—the period of a great creative interposition, during which by so many successive evolutions, the present economy was raised out of the wreck and materials of the one which had gone before it. But on this we need not speak decisively—for in whatever way the controversy is adjusted, there remains argument for a God. Should, in the first place, the Mosaic account be held to supersede all those speculations in Geology which would stretch the antiquity even of our earth beyond the period at which man was created—this were deferring to the historical evidence of the Old Testament—that book which of all others speaks most directly for a God, and which in fact may be regarded as the formal and express document in which the authoritative register of Creation is found. Or should it be allowed, in the second place, that the sacred penman does not fix the antiquity of our globe but only of our species—this leaves the historical argument entire, and enables us to superadd any geological argument which may be founded on certain characters of vicissitude in the history of our globe, that are alike recognised by all the systems of geology. Or, thirdly, should, instead of scripture superseding or harmonizing with geology, geology be held as superseding scripture, an imagination which of course we disown—still the argument for a creative interposition would not in consequence be banished from our world. It is the establishment of this last position to which at present we address ourselves. There are certain alleged processes in geology which if true show unequivocally, we have long thought, the

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marks and footsteps of a Divinity. There are some we are aware who have founded thereupon a melancholy Deism—our business now is to demonstrate, that even in this walk of inquiry, abused as it has been thus far to the purposes of licentious speculation, there are to be met the strongest of Nature's evidences against the system of a still dismal and wretched Atheism.

2. But let us here premise that our argument does not rest on the truth of any one of the geological theories. It is enough, if causes of decay and destruction are at work which are now undermining the present harmony of things; and which must therefore have brought to an end any economy that may have gone before it. All those who conceive of our globe that it had an existence, and was the theatre of physical changes anterior to the commencement of the scriptural era, agree in this. We are not called upon to intermeddle with the controversies of geological science, when it is by means of a universal article of belief that we attempt to establish the necessity of a Creative Interposition. We do not make ourselves responsible for any of the theories, although we select one for the purpose of illustration—seeing, in fact, that our argument rests not on the specialty of any of the Ante-Mosaical creeds, but on an assumption which is nearly common to them all. For generally speaking they proceed on the rise and disappearance of certain distinct and successive economies of nature on the face of our globe—the decay or destruction of each implying the extinction

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of at least so many of the animal and vegetable races proper to its era. It is on this and this alone that our argument is based; and we do not need therefore, for the purpose of upholding it, to advocate any one geological system in preference to others—seeing that it rests, not on the peculiarities of one creed, but on one article very generally if not universally to be found in them.

3. Our object in adverting to the speculations of geology is to direct the eye to a point in the physical history which it assigns to our globe, when, on every principle of our commonly received philosophy, there would be required a special interposition on the part of a God. It is to exhibit what we have long regarded as the nearest to a direct and experimental manifestation of a Creative Process. It is to make demonstration of a time when the goodliest specimens of organization that now abound in our world did not exist—and are therefore a consequent, from which we are fully warranted to reason of the antecedent that went before it. We know not from what quarter to borrow a more effectual weapon, for putting to flight the atheistical imagination of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, being upheld by a chain that is lost in a posterior direction among the obscurities of the distant future, and lost in an anterior direction among the still more formidable recesses of the eternity that is past. It is enough, if, amid the loose and unsettled speculations of geology, they generally point to this, that the chain is not endless but has had a definite commencement—and that

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therefore our present races were originated in a way different from that in which they are now perpetuated by successive generations.

4. Let us now offer then a short exposition of this argument with Cuvier's theory of the earth, on which, not to ground, but only to illustrate the argument.

5. The water of our present ocean holds certain substances in solution—and is thereby adapted to the support of certain marine animals. Now it is conceivable that the nature of this solution may be changed, either by coming into contact with new substances and dissolving them, or by a mere change in the proportion of its present ingredients. But it is probable, that, after the changes had been accomplished to a certain degree in the waters of the ocean, the present generation of marine animals could not exist in them. Those of them which were formed in nice dependence on the constitution of their element, would be the first to fall a sacrifice to its progressive alterations—the hardier would then follow—and, after the lapse of ages, it is conceivable that the change of element might be so great as to bring along with it the entire destruction of the existing genera.

6. The remains of marine animals must be accumulated every year in the bottom of the ocean. But this is not the only deposition that is going on there. There is an incessant deposition of sediment carried down by innumerable rivers, and obtained from the wearing of those various materials which compose the land. In addition to this, there may be the chemical precipitation of matter in a

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solid form from the water of the ocean itself. All these depositions may be spread over the bottom of the sea in successive layers or strata. They may be hardened by long-continued pressure into the consistency of stone. There may have been thousands of shells imbedded in them—and what is more, the form even of the softer fishes may be retained in petrifaction; and handed down to the observation of very distant ages.

7. All this may be going on in the vast and inaccessible solitudes of the deep—but how can the vestiges of such a process ever be submitted to actual observation? The ocean may change its place. There are known causes perfectly competent to the production of such an effect. What is now dry land may be submerged—and the deserted bed of the ocean may come to be inhabited by land animals. By an exercise of creative power the sea may be stocked with new generations, adapted to the last changes which its waters have undergone—and by another exercise of creative power, the new land which has been formed may also be peopled with living beings. If there be a rational being among the last like man, he might observe the traces of that process which took place in the last era of the history of the globe. He might learn from the vestiges of marine animals firmly imbedded in the stratified rock, that the ground he is now treading upon was at one time covered with the waters of the sea—and by comparing specimens extracted from the fossil productions around him with the fishes of the present ocean, he might come to the wonderful

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conclusion that the former species have been extinguished, and given place to a new and totally dissimilar generation.

8. But this is not all. The various tribes of land animals now multiply and die, and deposit their remains in that very region which abounds with the marine productions of a former era. The sediment of rivers is not all carried forward immediately to the sea. A great part of it is arrested in its progress, and goes either to accumulate a soil upon their banks, or to form alluvial land at their mouths. The skeletons of land animals are enveloped in this mass of mineral substances. The ocean which has changed its place once may do it again. It may make a second irruption upon the land, and sweep away whole genera of living creatures from the globe. The surface that is left dry may be repeopled by a few out of the many who may have escaped this catastrophe—or an ever watchful Deity may again interfere; and, by another exercise of creative power, may occupy the new formed land by other generations.

9. In this way the remains of land and of sea animals may be assembled together in the same neighbourhood. The successive retreats and irruptions of the Ocean may produce, not one, but a series of alternations. And the strata which are around us, each evincing its own relative antiquity by its position, and exhibiting the remains of its own peculiar animals, may serve the double purpose of recording the great revolutions which have taken place, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and upon the surface of our Globe.

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10. And, apart from any violent changes in the place of the Ocean, it must be obvious that the surface of the Globe is not in a state of permanency. There is a constant wearing of the land. Even its hardest materials could not resist for ever the incessant operation of the air and the moisture and the frost to which they are subjected. The mighty continent would at length wax old and disappear; and the world that we now live in become a howling solitude of waters.

11. To this it now tends, and thus to all appearance must it remain through eternity, but for a change in the place of the Ocean; and a change that may happen long before the degradation of the land to its own level. A slight change in the axis of the Earth would be altogether adequate for such an effect. It is to the diurnal revolution of the Earth round its axis, that we owe the deviation of its figure from a perfect sphere. The Earth is so much flattened at the poles and so much elevated at the equator, that the former are nearer to the centre of the Earth than the latter by so many English miles. What would be the effect then if the axis of the Earth were suddenly shifted? If the polar and equinoctial regions were to change places there would be a tendency towards an elevation of these miles in the one region, and as great a depression in the other—and the more transferable parts of the Earth's surface would be the first to obey this tendency. The Ocean would rush towards the new equator. The cohesion of the solid parts, would, it is likely, offer a feeble resistance, and give way to this

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mighty *conatus*—nor would the Earth become quiescent till a new and elevated equator was formed at right angles to the former one, and passing through the present poles.

12. But it is not necessary to assume so entire a change in the position of the Earth's axis as to produce so great a difference in any of the existing levels—nor would any single impetus indeed suffice to accomplish such a change. The transference of the poles from their present situation by a few degrees, would give rise to a revolution sudden enough and mighty enough for a great physical era in the history of the Globe—and a change of level indeed for a single quarter of a mile, would overwhelm its fairest regions, and destroy the vast majority of its living animals.

13. To show that we fear nothing from infidel science, let us present the following extract from La Place, the ablest and most exalted of its votaries, who in his book entitled "the System of the World," after having reasoned on the likelihood that in the course of ages a comet might interfere with our Earth, thus pictures the effects of the collision:—"It is easy to represent the effect of such a shock upon the Earth—the axis and motion of rotation changed—the waters abandoning their ancient position to precipitate themselves towards the new equator—the greater part of men and animals drowned in a universal deluge, or destroyed by the violence of the shock given to the terrestrial globe—whole species destroyed—all the monuments of human industry reversed—such are the effects which the shock of a comet would produce."——

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"We see then why the Ocean has abandoned the highest mountains on which it has left incontestable marks of its former abode. We see why the animals and plants of the south may be transported into the climates of the north, where their relics and impressions are still to be found—lastly, it explains the short period of the existence of the moral world—whose earliest monuments do not go much farther back than three thousand years. The human race reduced to a small number of individuals in the most deplorable state, occupied only with the immediate care of their subsistence, must necessarily have lost the remembrance of all sciences and of every art; and when the progress of civilization has again created new wants, every thing was to be done again as if man had been just placed upon the Earth. But whatever may be the cause assigned by philosophers to these phenomena—we may be perfectly at ease with respect to such a catastrophe during the short period of human life."

14. We may now understand what is meant by a formation. There is a formation going on just now at the bottom of our present ocean by those muddy depositions which are brought to it from all the rivers; and which, laid the one over the other, will form, it is supposed, the strata of a new continent. Mixed up with this there must be a constant accumulation going on both of shells and skeletons—and from the bony parts of the numerous and rapid generations by which the sea is peopled, there must accrue a perpetual addition to the solid materials of that deposit, which, by

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the operation of a coming catastrophe, may be the dry land of the next geological era. There is at present both a forming and a hardening process going forward under the waters of the deep—so that, when these waters shall have shifted their position, there will emerge a continent of the same firm and concrete texture with that which is now inhabited by ourselves—and like it too, lifted here and there into Alpine elevations, by the mighty violence that will then be abroad over the whole surface of the world. It is obvious that this new land will have been mainly built up from the waste and demolition of the present one—insomuch as now it is principally fed by the supply of new matter swept off from the earth by the flow of rivers, and transported into the cavities of the deep. It is thus that in geological language our present continent becomes the father of a new one; and that itself hath had a father and a grandfather, which venerable personage can further lay claim to an ancestry; and thus it is that on the face of our world there are characters by which to trace what may be called the pedigree of successive formations—the most recent of these formations being that which preceded the very last catastrophe; and the intervals between the catastrophes marking the distinct eras of a globe, which, for aught we know, might have been the theatre of many revolutions.

15. Now to come nearer to our argument. Correspondent to the marks by which one set of professional men, even the geologists, have arranged these various formations in the order of their

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antiquity—there is another set of professional men, even the anatomists or comparative anatomists, who in the course of their independent researches have by the study of fossil remains ascertained, they think, many of the species and genera of living creatures by which the world has been peopled during the respective eras of its physical history. It is certainly conceivable that a few stragglers may have survived the operation of one catastrophe —and transmitted their own proper genera and species to the era which immediately succeeded it, so as to leave a thin sprinkling of the same remains over the next formation in the series of the world's changes. But it would appear from the observations of Cuvier and others—that though in this way an occasional species may have survived one or two of these destructive revolutions; yet that each catastrophe annihilated the great majority of the existing genera, and that a very few more swept every trace of them away from the surface of the globe. In none of the old formations hath he ascertained the vestige of the human skeleton—marking the recent origin of our own species. It is only in the latest of these formations that he discovered traces indeed of any of our existing genera of animals. And, in proportion as he carries his observation upward among the senior formations, does he lose sight of all resemblance to any of the known living creatures by which our earth is peopled. But there is still, it is affirmed, a most distinct and various and perfectly ascertained population; and these older formations are crowded with the remains of it. But they are

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wholly distinct from the animals of the present system. Or, in other words, at each new catastrophe old races must have perished—and the world been stocked with new races distinct and diverse from the former ones.

16. It is to this peculiar object that the inquiries of the celebrated M. Cuvier are directed. Upon the former conclusions of geologists respecting the positions of the different strata, and the order of their formation—he grafts his own speculations as to the fossil remains which exist in them; and he finds that in proportion to the antiquity of the strata, is the dissimilarity of these remains to the present genera. Of the remains of sea animals, he says, "that their species and even their genera change with the strata; and although the same species occasionally recurs at small distances, it is generally the case that the shells of the ancient strata have forms peculiar to themselves—that they gradually disappear till they are not to be seen at all in the recent strata—still less in the existing seas, in which indeed we never discover their corresponding species, and where several even of their genera are not to be found—that on the contrary the shells of the recent strata resemble, as it respects the genera, those which still exist in the sea—and that in the last formed and loosest of these strata, there are some species which the eye of the most expert naturalist cannot distinguish from those which at present inhabit the ocean."

17. From this extract it will be perceived that the alleged revolutions are numerous. From the

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marks of rapidity and violence which are to be met with, it would also appear that they have been sudden. To this purpose might be alleged the breaking and overturning of the strata; and the heaps of debris and rounded pebbles which are found among the solid strata in various places.

18. And at length to bring our argument to a point. In conjunction with these phenomena, take the two following doctrines which are now held as being among the most firmly established in natural history. In the first place, were it not for certain residual phenomena which can with difficulty be disposed of, there is now about utterly exploded the old doctrine of a spontaneous or equivocal generation. As far as can be traced with positive certainty by the eye of observation, it is not known that either animal or vegetable is brought into existence in any other way than by transmission from an animal or vegetable of the same species. Many of those appearances which were at one time conceived to indicate the contrary to this, on a more strict and close examination, have been reduced to the ordinary process—and the more narrowly that the search is prosecuted, the more is the semblance of exception done away—insomuch that we might hold it as being nearly the universal creed of naturalists, that throughout both the animal and the vegetable kingdom, each individual hath had a parent of his own likeness. This may at least be affirmed of all the distinct and definite specimens which compose the great bulk whether of the zoology or botany of our present era—so far at least, as that it might with all safety be

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affirmed of all the species which are known to propagate themselves, that there has not yet been discovered the slightest tendency to the formation of the individuals of these species in any other way than by ordinary generation. However indeterminate the questions may yet be which respect certain obscure or animalcular cases, this surely does not affect the generality or invariableness of the doctrine in regard to all the well-known members whether of the vegetable or animal family—to the palpable trees or plants of the former, to the palpable quadrupeds or birds of the latter, as exemplified in the lion the horse the dog or the elephant. Whatever discovery might have yet been made, or whatever lack of discovery might yet remain in the microscopic or otherwise dark and perhaps inaccessible departments of nature—this does not affect the obvious and unexcepted truth as it relates to the overwhelming majority of our living generations; viz., that among all the other complicated processes, whether of fermentation or of putrefaction or of electric and chemical agency, which are now going on in the vast laboratory of nature, there is not one of them which approximates in the least towards the formation of such organic beings—each of which in fact is the link of a chain composed of links that are altogether similar to itself—each formed, and formed in no other way, than by a derivative process along the steps of a successive generation. It will at once be seen therefore how many are those exquisite and complex structures which are formed by the collocation of parts; and such a collocation as a

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well known physical law doth transmit, but which no physical law can originate that we are acquainted with—insomuch that we perceive not the slightest tendency to aught like the spontaneous formation of them. This holds true of all those individuals in our existing animal and vegetable races that come forth in the established line of their transmission, so perfectly organized—yet without that line we never observe even the smallest abortive or partial approximation to them. The mechanical and the chemical, however variously they are blended, never once approach in any of their results to the physiological, at least in such specimens as these. So that if we can but demonstrate a beginning for any such separate and independent races in the physiological kingdom, we shall obtain in our opinion the nearest possible view that is anywhere afforded within the limits of our creation of the fiat of a God.

19. The next doctrine which we have now to make use of is no less the universal faith of naturalists than the former. It is that the species do not run the one into the other. They are separated; and that, by barriers which are permanent and invincible. Should there even be a mingling of two contiguous species—the power either of transmitting this one anomaly, or of extending it any further, ceases as in the mule, with the immediate offspring. There is thus an instantaneous check in the way of that transformation by which the species may have been confounded and merged into one another—or at length been metamorphosed into other races which

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bore no resemblance whatever to their progenitors. Within the limits of a species there might be manifold varieties—but these limits can never be transgressed to the formation of another distinct and enduring species in the animal kingdom. Let us combine these two doctrines. There is in reference to almost, if not universally, to all actual races no spontaneous generation—therefore in the existing generation of each species we behold the present link of a chain, all whose preceding links have been similar to the one that is before our eyes. There is no transition of the species into each other—therefore they present us with so many separate chains, and which have maintained the separation during the whole currency of their existence. They diverge not into other species, nor is one species appended to another. They have either had distinct origins, or they have been distinct from all eternity. If the latter, it is not likely that they would have survived an indefinite number of catastrophes each of which might have swept off whole genera from the face of our earth, and all of which would (but for new collocations which no observed law can account for) have by this time left it in a state of desolation. But it is more distinct and decisive than any likelihood—that in the older formations no vestiges of our present genera are to be found; and that under our present economy, or even in the more recent formations, there are no vestiges of the older genera. A few of the earlier species, it would appear, may have survived one or two of those dreadful shocks to which our planet is exposed—but in the whole

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amount, it seems palpable, that on the one hand there has been an entire destruction of the ancient species, and on the other an entire renovation of species wholly distinct and dissimilar from the former. The older chains of succession have been suddenly terminated, as if broken off at their lower extremities. And the more recent chains, instead of being to be traced through the midway passage of a great geological tempest, for the older formations, those earlier records of our globe hold out no indication of them—the recent chains have after a catastrophe had their first and definite origin. Now the question is, Who or what is the originator? All the busy processes of nature which are going on around us, fail towards even so much as the formation of an organic being, endowed with the faculty of self-transmission. All the possible combinations which human ingenuity can devise, are baffled in the enterprise. And, save by that peculiar tie which connects the one link of this concatenation with the other, there is not in all the known resources of nature and art, another method by which such a creature can be formed. How then are the first links to be accounted for? Is there aught in the rude and boisterous play of a great physical catastrophe that can germinate those exquisite structures, which during our yet undisturbed economy have been transmitted in pacific succession to the present day? What is there in the rush and turbulence and mighty clamour of such great elements—of ocean heaved from its old resting place, and lifting its billows above the Alps and the Andes of a

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former continent—what is there in this to charm into being the embryos of an infant family wherewith to stock and to repeople a now desolated world? We see in the sweeping energy and uproar of this elemental war, enough to account for the disappearance of all the old generations—but nothing that might cradle any new generations into existence, so as to have effloresced on ocean's deserted bed the life and the loveliness which are now before our eyes. At no juncture, we apprehend, in the history of the world—is the interposition of Deity more manifest than at this—nor can we better account for so goodly a creation emerging again into new forms of animation and beauty from the wreck of the old one, than that the spirit of God moved on the face of the chaos—and that nature, turned by the last catastrophe into a wilderness, was again repeopled at the utterance of His word.

20. Those rocks which stand forth in the order of their formation, and are each imprinted with their own peculiar fossil remains, have been termed the archives of nature where she hath recorded the changes that have taken place in the history of the globe. They are made to serve the purpose of scrolls or inscriptions on which we might read of those great steps and successions by which the earth has been brought to its present state. And should these archives of nature be but truly deciphered, we are not afraid of their being openly confronted with the archives of revelation. It is unmanly to blink the approach of light from whatever quarter of observation it may fall upon us—and these are not the best friends of Christianity

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who feel either dislike or alarm, when the torch of science or the torch of history is held up to the Bible. For ourselves, we are not afraid, when the eye of an intrepid, if it be only of a sound philosophy, scrutinizes however jealously all its pages. We have no dread of any apprehended conflict between the doctrines of scripture and the discoveries of science—persuaded as we are, that whatever story the geologists of our day shall find to be engraven on the volume of nature, it will only the more accredit that story which is graven on the volume of revelation.

21. "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God said that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and the beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over

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the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them."

22. We have again to repeat that our reasoning is applicable not to one only but to all the Ante-Mosaic theories. To have place for it indeed, we have only to assume that the world has undergone such revolutions or been the subject of such violent operations as have been destructive of entire species that formerly existed upon its surface. Of this it is admitted by all that there are undoubted vestiges —giving us therefore sound reason to believe, that on the supposition of an eternal world, all the species by which it was peopled at some highly remote period must, by the continuance and repetition of the causes which destroyed several of them, have at length been swept away. The question would thus meet us—whence arose the species now in actual being? seeing that they have not subsisted from eternity. All nature and experience reclaim against the spontaneous generation of them—thus leaving us no other inference, than that organic structures of collocation so manifold and exquisite could only have sprung from the hands of a designer, from the fiat of a God.

23. There are many who, in expounding the science of natural theology, would shrink from all recognition of scripture—as if this were a mixing together of things altogether disparate or incongruous. There is a want, we shall not say of

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good feeling, but of good philosophy in this—unless we confine ourselves to the express object, of ascertaining how much of evidence for a God is furnished by the light of nature alone. The strength of the argument, upon the whole, on the side of religion, is often weakened by this jealous or studied disunion of the truth in one department from the truth in another; but believing as we do that, instead of a conflict, there is a corroborative harmony between them—we shall advert once more to the Mosaic account of the Creation; and, more especially as the reconciliation of this history with the indefinite antiquity of the globe seems not impossible; and that without the infliction of any violence on any of the literalities of the record.

24. The following are the two first verses in the book of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now let it be supposed that the work of the first day in the Mosaic account of the creation, begins with the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters. The detailed history of creation in the first chapter of Genesis begins at the middle of the second verse; and what precedes might be understood as an introductory sentence, by which we are most appositely told both that God created all things at the first; and that afterwards, by what interval of time it is not specified, the earth lapsed into a chaos, from the darkness and disorder of which the present system or economy of things was made

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to arise. By this hypothesis neither the first verse, nor the first half of the second verse forms any part of the narrative of the first day's operations,—the whole forming a preparatory sentence disclosing to us the initial act of creation at some remote and undefined period; and the chaotic state of the world, at the commencement of those successive acts of creative power, by which out of rude and undigested materials the present harmony of nature was ushered into being. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis, the world for aught we know might have been the theatre of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate, and to which she in fact has confidently appealed as the vestiges of so many successive continents that have now passed away. The whole speculation has ministered a vain triumph to infidelity—seeing first that the Historical Evidence of Scripture is quite untouched by those pretended discoveries of natural science; and that, even should they turn out to be substantial discoveries, they do not come into collision with the narrative of Moses. Should, in particular, the explanation that we now offer be sustained, this would permit an indefinite scope to the conjectures of geology—and without any undue liberty with the first chapter of Genesis. We may here state that there is no argument, saving that grounded on the usages of popular language, which would tempt us to meddle with the literalities of that ancient, and as appears to us authoritative record. Its main difficulty lies in the work of the fourth day, upon which God is said to have made two great

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lights, the greater to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night, and the stars also. Yet even this could be got over, if we adopt a principle which even Granville Penn has found necessary for the adjustment of his views—though himself a violent and we think an unnecessary alarmist upon this question. He supposes the Mosaic description to proceed not in the order of creation actually, but in its order optically—or in other words, that the sun and moon were not first made, but first made visible on the fourth day. We earnestly recommend, however, the perusal of his mineral and Mosaical geologies—not because of our great confidence in his skill or science as a naturalist, but because of a certain admirable soundness in many of those views that are purely theological. If he have erred in the one science, there is a redeeming force in the worth and stability of certain weighty aphorisms that he has given forth in relation to the other science. He does not respect enough the indications of nature and experience—and certain it is, that these might be so far disregarded as to invalidate some of our best arguments on the side of theism. If, for example, fossil remains are not to be looked upon as the vestiges of living creatures, it would follow, that what we have been in the habit of considering as forms of nice and excellent adaptation may have been produced without an object, and so after all be perfectly meaningless. We may assume with all safety that real shells were never formed by nature without the design of covering an animal—and hence, if we ever meet in any situation, how-

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ever novel or unexpected, with a shell or a tooth, we should confidently refer to the fish which the one inclosed, to the jaw-bone in which the other was inserted. Else we shall give countenance to the atheist's argument, that even animals themselves might have been casual productions.*

* Bishop Patrick's theory was that of an elemental chaos; and at the beginning of his commentary he argues for such a chaos, between the first production of which and the creation of light he imagines an indefinite period. He then supposes a work of six days.

Rosenmuller again, the German commentator and critic, conceives a previous earth, or a first production and a subsequent renovation.

The chief difficulty in the way of this supposition is the work of the fourth day, of which by our translation it is said—"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

Even Granville Penn contributes some help to the solution of this difficulty, when he tells us that the description in the first chapter of Genesis proceeds not in the order of the creation actually, but in its order optically.

But the most complete solution of this difficulty of which we know, has been furnished by Rosenmuller. On the fourth day he says, that "if any one who is conversant with the genius of the Hebrew, and free from any previous bias of his judgment, will read the words of this article in their natural connexion, he will immediately perceive that they import a direction or determination of the heavenly bodies to certain uses which they were to supply to the earth. The words יהי מאורת (in the 14th verse) are not to be separated from the rest, or to be rendered 'fiant luminaria,' let there be lights—that is 'let lights be made;' but rather 'let lights be'—that is, 'serve in the expanse of heaven'—'inserviant in expanso cœlorum'—for distinguishing between day and night, and let them be or serve for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. For we are to observe that the verb היה

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25. We regret that Penn, or Gisborne, or any other of our Scriptural geologists, should have entered upon this controversy without a sufficient preparation of natural science; and laid as much stress too on the argument which they employed, as if the whole truth and authority of revelation depended on it. It is thus that the cause of truth has often suffered from the misguided zeal of its advocates, anxiously struggling for every one position about which a question may have been raised; and so landing themselves at times in a situation of most humiliating exposure to the argument or ridicule of their adversaries. They

to be in construction with the prefix ל 'for,' is generally employed to express the direction or determination of a thing to an end, and not the production of the thing—for example, Numbers x. 31; Zechariah viii. 19, and in many other places."

He further argues thus—"But the difference between the singular יהי and the plural והיו in the 14th verse, demands a corresponding difference in the interpretation; and, therefore, if we would make that difference literally apparent we must thus literally interpret—'Fiat, luminaria in firmamento cœli ad dividendum inter diem et noctem, ut sint, in signa, et tempora, et in dies, et in annos, et sint ad illuminandum super terram.' That is 'Fiat ut luminaria sint in signa &c. et ad illuminandum &c.' The particle ו signifies 'ut' in three hundred passages, and והיו signifies 'ut sint' in several of them. This interpretation therefore yields this literal sense in our language—'Let it be, that the lights in the firmament of heaven, for dividing between the day and the night, be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.'—that is finally—'Let the lights in the firmament of heaven, for dividing between the day and night, be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so:' so that Rosenmuller's induction from the construction of this passage is 'de determinatione astrorum ad certos quosdam usus orbi terrarum præstandis, esse sermonem—non de productione'—or that the narrative in these verses respects the determination of the heavenly bodies to the performance of some certain uses to the earth—not to the production of these bodies."

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weaken the line of defence by extending it. They multiply their vulnerable points by spreading their detachments and their outworks over too great a surface, when they might have concentrated their strength within the limits of an impregnable fortress. They raise too loud an outcry of alarm, and lift too high a note of preparation, on the assault by their enemies of some insignificant outpost which might with all safety be conceded to them—so that when it does come to be occupied by assailants, there is just as tremendous a shout of victory on the one side, as there was of misplaced dread and violence upon the other. Meanwhile the citadel abideth in its ancient security, as commanding in its site and as strong in all its essential battlements as ever—and, in the consciousness of this strength, might they who look abroad from its turrets, eye with perfect tolerance, if not with complacency, the petty warfare that is occasionally breaking out at their remoter outskirts. It is right to be vigilant—but it is not right to waste the strength or the credit of a good cause upon the defence of an untenable position—and more especially, if that position be wholly insignificant. It is thus that in the management of what may be called intellectual tactics, it is good to keep by the strong points of an argument, and to abstain by all means from laying any more of weight on the minor or collateral reasonings than these reasonings will bear.

26. We have long regarded the contest between the cause of revelation on the one hand, and the infidelity of the geological schools upon the other,

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as merely an affair of outposts, which, however terminating, will leave the main strength of the Christian argument unimpaired. We have already endeavoured to show, how without any invasion even on the literalities of the Mosaic record, the indefinite antiquity of the globe might safely be given up to naturalists, as an arena whether for their sportive fancies or their interminable gladiatorship. On this supposition the details of that operation narrated by Moses, which lasted for six days on the earth's surface, will be regarded as the steps, by which the present economy of terrestrial things was raised, about six thousand years ago, on the basis of an earth then without form and void. While, for aught of information we have in the Bible, the earth itself may, before this time, have been the theatre of many lengthened processes—the dwelling place of older economies that have now gone by; but whereof the vestiges subsist even to the present day, both to the needless alarm of those who befriend the cause of Christianity, and to the unwarrantable triumph of those who have assailed it.

27. Let us never quit the strongholds of the Christian argument in hazarding a mere affair of outposts, unless we are quite sure of the ground we stand upon. There are certain zealous defenders of Christianity who in this way have done an injury to the cause. And it does give rise to a most unnecessary waste of credit and confidence, it does give the enemies of religion a most unnecessary triumph, when its defenders expose their ignorance in the maintenance of a position, which

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even though given up leaves Christianity as firmly based as ever, on those miraculous and prophetic and experimental evidences which substantiate the Bible as the authentic record of an authentic communication from Heaven to Earth, as a Book indited by holy men of God, who stood charged, not with the matters of physical science, but with those transcendently higher matters which relate to the moral guidance and the moral destiny of our species.

28. Yet whatever room there might be for wise and sound policy in managing the Christian argument, there is no reason at all for the pusillanimous feeling of dismay. Our cause may suffer a partial and temporary discredit from the mismanagement of its friends—but not all the strength and subtlety of its most powerful adversaries can achieve its permanent overthrow. Those days have gone by of triumphant anticipation to the enemies of the cross, when the wit of Voltaire, and the eloquence of Rousseau, and the sophistry of Hume, entered into menacing combination on the side of infidelity. These have all been withstood—and on the arena, too, of literary and intellectual debate—where many a feat of championship has been performed, in repelling those successive attacks, which under the semblance of philosophy have been made upon the Faith. For after all it is but a semblance and nothing more. That demi-infidel spirit, which for a generation or two has kept such hold of the seats of philosophy, did not find its ascendancy there till we had sunk down to an age of little men. Those great master-spirits of a former age, after whom

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there appeared the pigmies of what may be called a second-rate philosophy, were wholly exempted from it. In the days of proudest achievement and most colossal minds it was comparatively unknown —and so far from feeling a disgrace or a descent in Christianity, the illustrious names of Newton and Locke and Bacon and Boyle stand all associated with the defence and illustration of it.

CHAPTER III.

On the Strength of the Evidences for a God in the Phenomena of Visible and External Nature.

1. We include among the phenomena of external nature whatever can be exposed to the observation of human eyes—and therefore, the organization and mechanism of our own bodies. There is distinct and additional evidence for a God—and that too, we think, the strongest and most influential of any, grounded on a phenomenon purely mental, and so coming under the dominion of consciousness alone. This we shall advert to afterwards—but meanwhile, we should like to offer a brief recapitulation of what we deem to be the strong points of the Theistical argument, as far as it has yet been proceeded in; that by means of a condensed view we may perceive distinctly wherein it is that the main force of the reasoning lies.

2. The first strong point of this argument is grounded on the distinction which we have already

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endeavoured to make palpable between the laws of matter and the collocations of matter. In the reasoning for a God from the mere existence of matter, we certainly do not remark any strong point of argument whatever. And then, when this argument from the existence of matter is given up, there remains another obscure and indeterminable controversy about its properties, as to which of them may be essential, and which of them must have been communicated at the will and by the appointment of a devising and purposing and intelligent Being. Now so long as the argument tarries either at the existence or at the laws of matter, we do not think that we have yet come to any lucid or effective consideration upon the subject. We hold that at this part of the question the cause of Natural Theology has suffered from the confidence joined with the obscurity of those reasonings which have been made use of by its supporters; and that it were therefore a mighty service to the cause did we separate what in it is decisive and what in it is doubtful from each other.

3. They are the collocations, then, which form by far the most unequivocal tokens of a Divinity that the material world has to offer. We understand the term in a more comprehensive sense than that which is conveyed by its mere etymology. We mean not only that the parts of matter have been placed in right correspondence to each other; but that these parts, so placed, have been rightly sized and rightly shaped, for some obviously beneficial end of the combination in question—and moreover that forces of a right intensity and direc-

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tion have been made to meet together so as to be productive of some desirable result. The world is full of such collocations—and the strong circumstance is, that there is nothing in the yet ascertained laws of matter that could have given rise to them—insomuch that if at this moment any of them were destroyed, there appears nothing in these laws which could possibly replace them. It is true, that in astronomy, the argument founded on these, is all the less impressive, that it requires but the concurrence of few independent circumstances to complete the astronomical system. Such a concurrence however is indispensable—and in virtue of this it is, that the planetarium has been so exquisitely formed as never to deviate far from a mean state, but only to oscillate a little way on either side of it—else the system would have contained within itself the elements of its own destruction. It marks what the atheistical tendency is, that La Place should have ascribed this beautiful result to a law, and not to the collocations. He seems to have felt throughout his reasonings, wherein it was that the plausibility of atheism chiefly lay. But this also carries in it an intimation to us, wherein it is that the main strength lies of the argument for a Divinity. No doubt, the law is indispensable, and enters as one element into the calculation. But we have already noticed that the collocations are equally indispensable; and they enter as other elements into the calculation. So that if ever a time was when these collocations were not, if the present order of the heavens have had a commencement,—there seems nothing in

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any of the discovered laws or forces of matter which could have originated them. They seem only referable to the fiat and finger of a God.

4. But the argument gathers prodigiously in strength, when we descend from the celestial to the terrestrial collocations of things; from the contingencies which meet together in the formation of an astronomical, to those which meet together in the formation of an anatomical system; from the simple mechanism of the heavens into which so few simplicities are required to enter, to those complex organic mechanisms which require such a prodigiously varied and manifold combination. Could we but demonstrate a commencement for them, then the argument rises to almost the force of infinity for a God. And it seems impossible to escape from the belief of such a commencement, whatever opinion we may entertain as to the authority of the professed historical vouchers for the historical fact of a creation. If that authority be deferred to, then there is no practical need, at least, for any further reasoning on the subject. But if, on the other hand, it be set aside, as has been done by many on the strength of certain geological theories, then our argument is complete if in these very theories, there be the palpable proofs of a commencement to the present order of things. This is what we have endeavoured to demonstrate—not that we have any distrust in the authority of Moses as an historian—but that we hold it right to show as it were all the sides of our argument, and that all round it is impregnable—capable, therefore, of being shaped to every variety

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of speculation, and of gaining proselytes to its high cause from the disciples of all the sciences.

5. Now the most essential stepping-stone of this argument is a doctrine that has become the almost universal creed of naturalists—that there is no spontaneous generation, at least in reference to the vast majority of known species; to which we superadd the equally admitted doctrine—that there is no transmutation of the species. It is now upwards of a century since the evidence of the former became so palpable, as to constitute it into an article of philosophical belief—and the advocates of Theism in that day, were not blind to the importance of it. We will find it, and deservedly, the subject of gratulation and triumph to Bentley and others. It goes to establish an impassable barrier between the physiological on the one hand, and the chemical or the mechanical on the other—insomuch that we have never distinctly made out of all the processes in chemistry, or of all the principles and powers in natural philosophy, that they even approximate to the formation of an organic being, at least of an organic being which has the property of self-transmission. Of almost all our living races it may be said that we do not perceive so much as a rudimental or abortive tendency to it—whereas, had there been an equivocal generation, and had our present animal and vegetable races originated in such a lucky combination as favoured their complete development, we should for one instance that succeeded have witnessed a thousand frustrated in the progress—all nature teeming, as it were with abortions innumerable; and for each

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new species brought to perfection under our eyes, we should have beheld millions falling short at the incipient and at all the progressive stages of formation, with some embryo stifled in the bud, or some half-finished monster checked by various adverse elements and forces in its path to vitality. Now in the whole compass of observation, no such phenomena are to be found. We do not see any of the species with which we are at all familiar brought forward in this way—and wait in vain for such from the immatured buddings of animal and vegetable formation. Each actual variety through the great extent of the ascertained physiological kingdom is perfect in its way—and there is a distinct invariable line of transmission in which, but never out of which, we behold the production of each of them. Could we only demonstrate then a commencement for all or for any of these lines, we should be conducted to the period when there took place a most skilful, a most complete, a most varied collocation—and that, by means which nature, that great goddess of the infidel philosophy, as far as the eye of philosophy ever has explored, does not hold in any of her magazines. We should see, in striking exemplification, the collocations of matter taking place, and by other means than by any laws of matter which we at least are acquainted with—and on comparing the manifold fitness of the collocations with the impotency of the laws, we should have the nearest experimental argument that can be given for the energy of a creative word, for the fiat and the forthgoings of a Deity.

6. The commencement, then, even of any of our

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animal or vegetable races would seem to decide this question. Let us by any means be made to know of any of the existing generations, that historically it had a first and a definite origin; and this of itself would carry in it the demonstration of a God. But the proper argument in behalf of this or of any historical fact is historical evidence—and to overlook the strength of such evidence for a creation in the Jewish Scriptures were not merely unchristian but unphilosophical. Yet it is with the air, and apparently under the sanction of philosophy that this evidence has of late been contravened. The plausibilities of geological science or speculation have been brought to bear against it. Instead of looking to the narrative of scripture, we are called upon to look at the demonstration of certain lengthened processes which this science would substitute, and wherewith it would set aside the authority of Moses. Yet in these very processes do we behold, and in characters the most vivid and discernible, the footsteps of a Deity. In the attempt to escape from Christianity, geologists have been caught or involved, more surely in theism. Under all systems which ascribe to matter an indefinite antiquity, each successive economy in our world is supposed to contain within itself the elements of decay, or to be exposed to certain processes of violence and destruction. This vexed and agitated globe has been conceived of as the theatre of such revolutions, that though the earth itself in matter and substantive being has survived them, the frail organic creatures upon its surface could not have survived them. It matters not how

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the alleged catastrophes have been brought about —whether by fire from the centre, or by ocean heaved from its old resting-place, and, in one mighty resistless tide, sweeping, as with the besom of destruction, those continents on which the animals of a former era had for thousands of ages held their unmolested habitation. It is enough if by one catastrophe whole species or genera have been extinguished; and if by an indefinite number of them throughout past eternity all the genera at one time in the world might now have disappeared. The question still is unresolved, what the origin, or whence the existence of our present races? Not by spontaneous generation, we are taught by natural science, in one of its most authoritative lessons. Not as we know from another of its lessons, by the transmutation of old species into new ones. Not by any combination that we have ever observed of all the known powers and principles in creation—and thus are we enabled to refer those things in nature which of all others have most exquisite and manifold collocations—the most certainly to a definite origin, the most nearly to the finger of a Creator.

7. There is another strong point in the argument; and which has been turned with great effect by theistical writers to the service of the cause. In reasoning on the perfect symmetry and commodiousness of the animal machine, there is a certain infidel evasion that has been made from the argument. It has been affirmed that most of the alleged fitnesses, in the construction of an organic being, are not only indispensable to comfort but

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indispensable to life, so that the race could not have survived the want of them; and, that therefore, it is impossible from the nature of the thing that any of the opposite unfitnesses can ever be found in any of our existing specimens. At this rate it will be observed of the actual races, that they are regarded but as the fortunate relics, which, amid an infinity of chances, have realized all the necessary conditions for the upholding of vitality, and for the transmitting of it to successive generations. They are the lucky few, which, by the mathematical doctrine of probabilities, were certainly to be looked for, in a countless multitude of failures or abortions. Any mal-convenance which is incompatible with life cannot from the very nature of the case be presented to observation; and therefore cannot be appealed to by reasoners on the atheistical side of the argument. Now they complain of this as the loss of an advantage—whereas on the side of their antagonists there are so many random productions, they affirm, which in an infinity of combinations are not more than might have been expected, but a plausible and confident appeal to which will make the worse appear the better argument.

8. Our first reply to this has in some measure been anticipated. Any such embryo formations as we have supposed have never once been witnessed by us. Exterior to the established line of transmission, there is not even an incipient movement to be seen, in any department of nature, towards the production of animals or vegetables endowed with the faculty of afterwards transmitting

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themselves. We see no example in all the multiform combinations of chemistry and mechanics, however aided by various and variously blended physical influences, of any half-formed mechanism of this sort passing onward to its completion, but arrested in its progress and thrown back again, because of some deficient sense or organ that is essential to vitality. The argument represents nature as teeming with abortions, whereas in the whole compass of nature, no such abortion, and not even the tendency to it has been found.

9. But our second reply we hold to be still more satisfactory. There can be conceived many thousands of mal-adjustments, each of which would be incompatible with comfort and not incompatible with life—yet none of which we ever see realized. The argument of the atheists presupposes of every adaptation in the animal frame, which we plead in proof of design, that it is essential to vitality—but it is not so. The nails, for example at the extremities of our fingers, and the position of which we ascribe to collocation but they to the blind direction of a physical law—may be conceived to have been otherwise situated, without any such hazard to the life of man as would have led to the extinction of the race. They might have been ranged in separate horny excrescences round the wrist, instead of being ranged as now at the places where they are most serviceable. In like manner the teeth might have been less conveniently posited than they are actually—or the cutting and grinding teeth might have changed places, instead of being fixed and arranged in the very way that makes

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them the most effective. We are quite sure that by going in detail over the human body, many thousands of changes could be pointed out, each entailing severe trouble and discomfort upon man, yet without hazard to the being of the individual or to the endurance of the species. How then is the actual optimism of the human frame to be accounted for? Why is it that no alteration can be proposed either in shape or locality which would not deteriorate the mechanism? There is, no doubt, a certain limit, beyond which if the changes were to proceed, they would prove incompatible with life, and so expunge the specimen altogether from observation—but how comes it, that between this limit and the actual state of every existing species we see nothing awkward, nothing misplaced, nothing that admits of being mended—without one of those inaptitudes or disproportions which either a blind nature, or a sportive and capricious chance, must have infallibly and in myriads given rise to? Whence no idle excrescences in those complicated systems? How comes each part to be in such exquisite harmony with the whole? What but manifold experience could have taught the anatomist to ground such confident inferences on the uses of every thing that he discovers in the animal framework—and whence can it be, but from the actual design which presided over these formations, that, when reasoning on final causes, he is in the best possible track for the enlargement of his science? Whence the certainty, the almost axiomatic certainty of the position, that there is nothing useless in the anato-

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mical structure? And that, on the contrary, anatomists never reason more safely, than when they presume and reason on an universal usefulness. And this principle so far from misleading, which in a random economy of things it would infallibly have done, has often been the instrument of anatomical discovery. Could this have been the case under a mere system either of headlong forces, or of fortuitous combinations? Would not the monstrous and the grotesque and the incongruous have ever and anon been obtruded upon our view—and when instead of this we behold such significancy in every part and in every function of the physiological system, does not this tell most significantly of a God?

10. There is an infinity of examples to the same effect in the inferior creation. As one instance out of the many, we find wings attached to the animals, who, from the smallness or comparative lightness of their bodies, can obtain the benefit of them. Why not wings on horses and other large animals, who could shift well enough to live though they could not use their wings? And here there occurs to us the remarkable instance of a congruity in the parts of animals, greatly subservient to their accommodation, yet experimentally proved in a familiar case to be not essential to life. We all know that the necks of quadrupeds, as is magnificently set forth in the camelopard, are in general commensurate with their fore legs. The same proportion is observed in birds especially those which feed upon grass. The obvious design of this collocation is that they may be enabled to

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reach the ground conveniently with their bills. Now there is no exception to this rule by which the length of the neck keeps pace with that of the legs in land fowls—but there is an exception in the case of those water-fowls that feed on the produce of water bottoms—as the swan whose neck is much larger in proportion than its legs, and also the goose, both of which birds seek for their food in the slimy bottom of lakes or pools. Now it so happens of the goose that it can live upon land with its long neck and short legs—though the disproportion under which it labours gives an obvious awkwardness to its appearance and gait—besides, we have no doubt, subjecting it to a certain degree of inconvenience in feeding. Here then is one example of an incongruity consistent with life, and fully authorizing the question, why under a random or unintelligent economy of things, there is not an infinite multitude of such examples among living animals? It will be perceived of this one example, that, while it both furnishes and illustrates the argument on which we now insist, it carries in it no exception to the wisdom of the Creator. The animal is amphibious. Its natural habitat is the margin of lakes. It may live on land, but it can live on water—and is furnished with its long neck for the sake of the additional food obtained from this latter element.

11. Before quitting this subject we may remark that the exception which takes place in the proportion between the necks and the legs is peculiar to those birds that are webfooted. Now is there aught, we would ask, in a disproportion between

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necks and legs that is fitted by the mere operation of a blind and physical energy to produce these webs? Or, can the adjustment of parts so remote and unconnected be ascribed to any thing but collocation?

12. There is a very pleasing information recently given in a most entertaining book of travels by Mr. Waterton. It respects the sloth—an animal which creeps along the ground with every symptom of distress, as if it laboured under the pain and discomfort of some very grievous mal-adjustment. According to the narrative of this very adventurous traveller, he has cleared up this apparent exception to the order of perfect adaptation throughout the animal kingdom. The creature, it would appear, when on the ground, is out of its element. Its natural habitat is among the branches of trees, which branches interlaced with each other afford a continuous path for hundreds of miles in the extensive forests of South America. Its feet, it would appear, were not made for pressing upon the earth, but for lapping into each other, so as to suspend the animal with its back undermost on those horizontal branches, along which it warps its way from one tree to another. When it regains its natural situation, it instantly recovers, it is said, its natural alacrity, and exchanges the agony it experienced, when in a state of violence, for the ease and enjoyment of one who feels himself at home. The frame and habitudes of the creature are thus found, as with all other animals, to be exactly suited to the place of its proper occupation —so as no longer to stand in the way of the general

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doctrine, that each creature is perfect in its kind and all very good.*

13. In order to taste the richness and power of the theistical argument, one would need to enter upon the details of it. For doing aught like adequate justice to the theme, we should go piecemeal over the face of this vast and voluminous creation; and show how in the exquisite textures of every leaf and every hair and every membrane, Nature throughout all her recesses was instinct with contrivance, and in the minute as well as the magnificent announced herself the workmanship of a Master's hand. We cannot venture on the statistics of so wide and so exuberant a territory. The variety in which we should lose ourselves, the Psalmist hath expressively designed by the epithet of "manifold"—and this sets forth the significancy of that scriptural expression, "the manifold wisdom of God." It is to us interminable. When told that we might expatiate for weeks together on the habitudes and economy of a single insect, we may guess how arduous the enterprise would be, to traverse the whole length and breadth of a land, so profusely overspread and so densely peopled with the tokens of a planning and presiding Deity. It

* Dr. Buckland has treated this subject scientifically in a recent paper, "On the Adaptation of the Structure of the Sloths to their peculiar mode of Life," in which he demonstrates, that, so far from being chargeable with imperfection or monstrosity, the construction of the sloth "adds another striking case to the endless instances of perfect mechanism and contrivance, which we find pervading every organ of every creature, when viewed in relation to the office it is destined to fulfil; and affords a new exemplification of the principle, which has been so admirably illustrated by the judicious Paley, 'that the animal is fitted to its state.'"

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would be to compass all philosophy—it would be to describe the Encyclopedia of human knowledge; and, out of the spoils collected from every possible quarter of contemplation, to make an offering to Him of whom it has been eloquently said, that He sits enthroned on the riches of the universe. It would be to trace the footsteps of a Being, who, while He wields with giant strength the orbs of immensity, pencils every flower upon earth and hangs a thousand dew-drops around it—at one time walking in greatness among the wonders of the firmament, and at another, or rather at the same time, scattering beauty of all sorts in countless hues and inimitable touches around our lowly dwelling-places. He hath indeed lighted up most gloriously the canopy that is over our heads —He hath shed unbounded grace and decoration on the terrestrial platform beneath us. Yet these are only parts of his ways—for the whole of his Productiveness and Power who can comprehend? This will be the occupation of Eternity—amid that diversity of operations at present so baffling, to scan the counsels of the God who worketh all in all.

14. Our limits do not permit so much as an entrance upon this field—let us therefore recommend the study of those authors who have ventured upon the enterprise, and have followed it up with a more or a less successful execution. Mixed up with the unsatisfactory metaphysics of that period, the reader will find a good deal of solid argumentation, in the Sermon preached about the beginning of the last century at the Boyle Lectureship—

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though we confess that on this question, we have greater value for the works of Ray and Derham than for them all put together. Even these however have been now superseded by the masterly performance of Dr. Paley—a writer of whom it is not too much to say, that he has done more than any other individual who can be named to accommodate the defence both of the Natural and the Christian Theology to the general understanding of our times. He, in particular, has illustrated with great felicity and effect the argument for a God from those final causes which may be descried in the appearances of nature—and, although he has confined himself chiefly to one department, that is the anatomical, yet that being far the most prolific of this sort of evidence, he has altogether composed from it a most impressive pleading on the side of Theism. He attempts no eloquence; but there is all the power of eloquence in his graphic representation of natural scenes and natural objects—just as a painter of the Flemish School may without any creative faculty of his own, but on the strength of his imitative faculties only, minister to the spectators of his art all those emotions both of the Sublime and Beautiful which the reality of visible things is fitted to awaken. And so without aught of the imaginative, or aught of the etherial about him—but in virtue of the just impression which external things make upon his mind, and of the admirable sense and truth wherewith he reflects them back again, does our author by acting merely the part of a faithful copyist, give a fuller sense of the richness and repleteness of this argument, than is

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or can be effected by all the elaborations of an ambitious oratory. Of him it may be said, and with as emphatic justice as of any man who ever wrote, that there is no nonsense about him—and so, with all his conceptions most appropriate to the subject that he is treating, and these bodied forth in words each of which is instinct with significancy and most strikingly appropriate—we have altogether a performance neither vitiated in expression by one clause or epithet of verbiage, nor vitiated in substance by one impertinence of prurient or misplaced imagination. His predominent faculty is judgment—and therefore it is, that he is always sure to seize on the relevancies or strong points of an argument, which never suffer from his mode of rendering them, because, to use a familiar but expressive phrase, they are at all times exceedingly well put. His perfect freedom from all aim and all affectation is a mighty disencumbrance to him—he having evidently no other object, than to give forth in as clear and correct delineation as possible, those impressions which nature and truth had spontaneously made on his own just and vigorous understanding. So that, altogether, although we should say of the mind of Paley that it was of a decidedly prosaic or secular cast—although we should be at a loss to find out what is termed the poetry of his character, and doubt in fact whether any of the elements of poetry were there—although never to be found in the walk of sentiment or of metaphysics, or indeed in any high transcendental walk whatever whether of the reason or of the fancy—yet to him there most unquestion-

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ably belonged a very high order of faculties. His most original work is the Horæ Paulinæ, yet even there he discovers more of the observational than the inventive; for after all, it was but a new track of observation which he opened up, and not a new species of argument which he devised that might immortalize its author, like the discovery of a before unknown calculus in the mathematics. All the mental exercises of Paley lie within the limits of sense and of experience—nor would one ever think of awarding to him the meed of genius. Yet in the whole staple and substance of his thoughts there was something better than genius—the home-bred product of a hale and well-conditioned intellect, that dealt in the *ipsa corpora* of truth, and studied use and not ornament in the drapery wherewith he invested it. We admit that he had neither the organ of high poetry nor of high metaphysics—and perhaps would have recoiled from both as from some unmeaning mysticism of which nothing could be made. Yet he had most efficient organs notwithstanding—and the Volumes he has given to the world, plain perspicuous and powerful, as was the habitude of his own understanding—fraught throughout with meaning, and lighted up not in the gorgeous colouring of fancy but in the clearness of truth's own element—these Volumes form one of the most precious contributions which, for the last half century, have been added to the theological literature of our land.

15. It has been said that there is nothing more uncommon than common sense. It is the perfection of his common sense which makes Paley at once so

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rare and so valuable a specimen of our nature. The characteristics of his mind make up a most interesting variety, and constitute him into what may be termed a literary phenomenon. One likes to behold the action and reaction of dissimilar minds —and therefore it were curious to have ascertained how he would have stood affected by the perusal of a volume of Kant, or by a volume of lake poetry. We figure that he would have liked Franklin; and that, coming down to our day, the strength of Cobbett would have had in it a redeeming quality to make even his coarseness palatable. He would have abhorred all German sentimentalism—and of the *a priori* argument of Clarke, he would have wanted the perception chiefly because he wanted patience for it. His appetite for truth and sense would make him intolerant of all which did not engage the discerning faculties of his soul—and from the sheer force and promptitude of his decided judgment, he would throw off *instanter* all that he felt to be uncongenial to it. The general solidity of his mind posted him as if by gravitation on the *terra firma* of experience, and restrained his flight into any region of transcendental speculation. Yet Coleridge makes obeisance to him—and differently moulded as these men were, this testimony from the distinguished metaphysician and poet does honour to both.

16. Having thus dwelt as long as our limits will admit, on the evidences of design in external nature—it is all important to remark, that on the one hand there might be innumerable most lucid indications of design in particular instances, while

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on the other a mystery impenetrable may hang over the general design of creation. The lesson that there is a presiding intelligence, may shine most vividly forth in the details of the universe—and yet the drift, or what we should term the policy of the universe, may be wrapt in profoundest secrecy from our view. The world may teem all over with the indications of contrivance—and yet the end which the contriver had in view, the moving cause which impelled him to the formation of the world, or the final destination that awaits it, may all baffle the comprehension of men, who nevertheless can read the inscription of a manifold and marvellous wisdom on every page in the volume of nature. So that on the one hand there may be overpowering light, while on the other there is hopeless and unconquerable darkness. In the workmanship of nature we behold an infinity of special adaptations to special objects, each of which bespeaks a sovereign mind that plans and purposes—yet there may the deepest obscurity hang over the question, what is the plan or purpose of this workmanship on the whole? It is just as when looking to an individual man, we cannot but recognise the conceptions of an architect in the teeth, and the eyes, and the hands, and all the parts of manifest subserviency which belong to him—yet remain unable to solve the enigma of his being, or to fathom the general conception of the Divinity in thus ushering a creature to existence, that he may live in restless vanity, and die in despair. And what is true of an individual is true of a species or of a universe. Throughout,

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and in its separate parts, it may be pregnant with the notices of a Divinity—yet in reference both to its creation and its government, to the principle in which it originated and the consummation in which it issues, there may be an overhanging mystery—and man, all clear and confident on the question that God is, may abide notwithstanding in deepest ignorance of His purposes and His ways.

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BOOK III.

PROOFS FOR THE BEING AND CHARACTER OF GOD IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN MIND.

CHAPTER I.

General Considerations on the Evidence afforded by the Phenomena and Constitution of the Human Mind for the Being of a God.

1. THERE are many respects in which the evidence for a God, given forth by the constitution of the human body, differs from the evidence given forth by the constitution of the human spirit. It is with the latter evidence that we have now more peculiarly to deal; but at present we shall only advert to a few of its distinct and special characteristics. The subject will at length open into greater detail, and development—yet a brief preliminary exposition may be useful at the outset, should it only convey some notion of the difficulties and particularities of this branch of the argument.

2. A leading distinction between the material and the mental fabrications is, the far greater complexity of the former, at least greater to all human observation. Into that system of means which has been formed for the object of seeing, there enter at least twenty separate contingencies, the absence of any one of which would either

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derange the proper function of the eye, or altogether destroy it. We have no access to aught like the observation of a mental structure; and all of which our consciousness informs us is a succession of mental phenomena. Now in these we are sensible of nothing but a very simple antecedent followed up, and that generally on the instant, by a like simple consequent. We have the feeling and still more the purpose of benevolence, followed up by complacency. We have the feeling or purpose, and still more the execution of malignity, or rather the recollection of that execution, followed up by remorse. However manifold the apparatus may be which enables us to see an external object —when the sight itself, instead of the consequent in a material succession, becomes the antecedent in a mental one; or, in other words, when it passes from a material to a purely mental process; then, as soon, does it pass from the complex into the simple; and, accordingly, the sight of distress is followed up, without the intervention of any curiously elaborated mechanism that we are at all conscious of, by an immediate feeling of compassion. These examples will, at least, suffice to mark a strong distinction between the two inquiries, and to show that the several arguments drawn from each must at least be formed of very different materials.

3. There are two distinct ways in which the mind can be viewed, and which constitute different modes of conception, rather than diversities of substantial and scientific doctrine. The mind may either be regarded as a congeries of different

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faculties; or as a simple and indivisible substance, with the susceptibility of passing into different states. By the former mode of viewing it, the memory, and the judgment, and the conscience, and the will, are conceived of as so many distinct but co-existent parts of mind, which is thus represented to us somewhat in the light of an organic structure, having separate members, each for the discharge of its own appropriate mental function or exercise. By the latter, which we deem also the more felicitous mode of viewing it, these distinct mental acts, instead of being referred to distinct parts of the mind, are conceived of as distinct acts of the whole mind,—insomuch that the whole mind remembers, or the whole mind judges, or the whole mind wills, or, in short, the whole mind passes into various intellectual states or states of emotion, according to the circumstances by which at the time it is beset, or to the present nature of its employment. We might thus either regard the study of mind as a study in contemporaneous nature; and we should then, in the delineation of its various parts, be assigning to it a natural history,—or we might regard the study of mind as a study in successive nature; and we should then, in the description of its various states, be assigning to it a natural philosophy. When such a phrase as the anatomy of the human mind is employed by philosophers, we may safely guess that the former is the conception which they are inclined to form of it.* When such a phrase again

* It is under this conception too that writers propose to lay down a map of the human faculties.

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as the physiology of the human mind is made use of, the latter is the conception by which, in all probability, it has been suggested. It is thus that Dr. Thomas Brown designates the science of mind as mental physiology. With him, in fact, it is altogether a science of sequences, his very analysis being the analysis of results, and not of compounds.

4. Now, in either view of our mental constitution there is the same strength of evidence for a God. It matters not for this, whether the mind be regarded as consisting of so many useful parts, or as endowed with as many useful properties. It is the number, whether the one or other, of these—out of which the product is formed of evidence for a designing cause. The only reason why the useful dispositions of matter are so greatly more prolific of this evidence than the useful laws of matter, is, that the former so greatly outnumber the latter. Of the twenty independent circumstances which enter into beneficial concurrence in the formation of an eye, that each of them should be found in a situation of optimism, and none of them occupying either an indifferent or a hurtful position—it is this which speaks so emphatically against the hypothesis of a random distribution, and for the hypothesis of an intelligent order. Yet this is but one out of the many like specimens, wherewith the animal economy thickens and teems in such marvellous profusion. By the doctrine of probabilities, the mathematical evidence, in this question between the two suppositions of intelligence or chance, will be found, even on many a single organ of the human framework, to preponderate vastly more

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than a million-fold on the side of the former. We do not affirm of the human mind that it is so destitute of all complication and variety, as to be deficient altogether in this sort of evidence. Let there be but six laws or ultimate facts in the mental constitution, with the circumstance of each of them being beneficial; and this of itself would yield no inconsiderable amount of precise and calculable proof, for our mental economy being a formation of contrivance, rather than one that is fortuitous or of blind necessity. It will at once be seen, however, why mind, just from its greater simplicity than matter, should contribute so much less to the support of natural theism, of that definite and mathematical evidence which is founded on combination.

5. But, although in the mental department of creation, the argument for a God that is gathered out of such materials, is not so strong as in the other great department—yet it does furnish a peculiar argument of its own, which, though not grounded on mathematical data, and not derived from a lengthened and logical process of reasoning, is of a highly effective and practical character notwithstanding. It has not less in it of the substance, though it may have greatly less in it of the semblance of demonstration, that it consists of but one step between the premises and the conclusion. It is briefly, but cannot be more clearly and emphatically expressed than in the following sentence.—"He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?"

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That the parent cause of intelligent beings shall be itself intelligent is an aphorism, which, if not demonstrable in the forms of logic, carries in the very announcement of it a challenging power over the acquiescence of almost all spirits. It is a thing of instant conviction, as if seen in the light of its own evidence, more than a thing of lengthened and laborious proof. It may be stigmatized as a mere impression—nevertheless the most of intellects go as readily along with it, as they would from one *contiguous* step to another of many a stately argumentation. If it cannot be exhibited as the conclusion of a syllogism, it is because of its own inherent right to be admitted there as the major proposition. To proscribe every such truth, or to disown it from being truth, merely because incapable of deduction, would be to cast away the first principles of all reasoning. It would banish the authority of intuition, and so reduce all philosophy and knowledge to a state of universal scepticism—for what is the first departure of every argument but an intuition, and what but a series of intuitions are its successive stepping-stones? We should soon involve ourselves in helpless perplexity and darkness, did we insist on every thing being proved and on nothing being assumed—for valid assumptions are the materials of truth, and the only office of argument is to weave them together into so many pieces of instruction for the bettering or enlightening of the species.

6. We are not to estimate the strength or clearness of that Natural Theology which obtains throughout the mass of our population, by the impression of our scientific arguments upon their

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understandings—whether these be metaphysical, or drawn from the study of external nature. Whether they comprehend the reasoning that is grounded on the arrangements of the material world or not, they are in immediate contact with other phenomena, which far more promptly suggest and far more powerfully convince them of a God. With all the defect and inferiority which have been ascribed to the department of mind, as being less fertile of evidence for a God than the department of matter, it is really in the former where the most influential of that evidence is to be found. There may be a greater difficulty in evolving the mental than the material proofs; but they are not on that account the less effective on the popular understanding—when, without the formality of an inferential process, the most illiterate of the species recognise a presiding Deity in the felt workings of their own spirit, and more especially the felt supremacy of conscience within them. There seems but one step from the consciousness of the mind that is felt, to the conviction of the mind that originated—for that blind and unconscious matter cannot, by any of her combinations, evolve the phenomena of mind, is a proposition seen in its own immediate light, and felt to be true with all the speed and certainty of an axiom. It is to such truth, as being of instant and almost universal consent, that, more than to any other, we owe the existence of a natural theology among men: yet, because of the occult mysticism wherewith it is charged, it is well that ours is a cause of such rich and various argument; that in her service we can build up syllogisms, and

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expatiate over wide fields of induction, and amass stores of evidence, and, on the useful dispositions of matter alone, can ground such large computations of probability in favour of an intelligent cause or maker for all things, as might silence and satisfy the reasoners.

7. Still both with philosophers and with the common people, the belief of a God may be altogether a thing of inference, and not of direct intuition—and perhaps it were safer, did we confine ourselves to this idea. Yet let us advert though but briefly and incidentally to the notion, that among all men there is a certain immediate and irresistible sense of God. We are by no means sure but there may. We at least conceive that with but one fact within the hold and the intimate conviction of all, and but one step of an inferential process therefrom, we come to the most powerful and practical impression which nature gives of a Deity. This fact is the felt supremacy of conscience within us—and the conclusion is the actual supremacy of a living Judge and Ruler over us. We shall not pretend to say whether there may not be a quicker discernment than this—nay even the instantaneous view of a God in the light of a still more direct manifestation. We should feel as if liable to the charge of mysticism, did we make any confident averment of such an intuition. But we may at least say of all innate thoughts and impressions of the Divinity, that, if they do exist, it is no mysticism to affirm of them, that they will be of great practical effect in religion—even though we should not be able to ascertain them. They

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are not the less influential, though unseen—morally of powerful operation, though metaphysically never analyzed or beyond the reach of analysis. Even if they suggest but the imagination of a God they are not without their importance in Theology—laying man under a most direct obligation to entertain the subject, and fastening a great moral delinquency upon his irreligious neglect of it.

8. And there is one inquiry in Natural Theology, which the constitution of the mind, and the adaptation of that constitution to the external world, are pre-eminently fitted to illustrate—we mean the character of the Deity. We hold that the material universe affords decisive attestation to His natural perfections, but that it leaves the question of His moral perfections involved in profoundest mystery. The machinery of a serpent's tooth, for the obvious infliction of pain and death upon its victims, may speak as distinctly for the power and intelligence of its Maker as the machinery of those teeth which, formed and inserted for simple mastication, subserve the purposes of a bland and beneficent economy. An apparatus of suffering and torture might furnish as clear an indication of design, though a design of cruelty, as does an apparatus for the ministration of enjoyment furnish the indication also of design, but a design of benevolence. Did we confine our study to the material constitution of things, we should meet with the enigma of many perplexing and contradictory appearances. We hope to make it manifest, that in the study of the mental constitution, this enigma is greatly alleviated, if not wholly done

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away; and, at all events, that within this peculiar department of evidence there lie the most full and unambiguous demonstrations, which nature hath any where given to us, both of the benevolence and the righteousness of God.

9. If, in some respects, the phenomena of mind tell us less decisively than the phenomena of matter, of the existence of God, they tell us far more distinctly and decisively of His attributes. We have already said that, from the simplicity of the mental system, we met with less there of that evidence for design which is founded on combination, or on that right adjustment and adaptation of the numerous particulars, which enter into a complex assemblage of things, and which are essential to some desirable fulfilment. It is not, therefore, through the medium of this particular evidence—the evidence which lies in combination; that the phenomena and processes of mind are the best for telling us of the Divine existence. But if otherwise, or previously told of this, we hold them to be the best throughout all nature for telling us of the Divine character. For if once convinced, on distinct grounds, that God is, it matters not how simple the antecedents or the consequents of any particular succession may be. It is enough that we know what the terms of the succession are, or what the effect is wherewith God wills any given thing to be followed up. The character of the ordination, and so the character of the ordainer, depends on the terms of the succession; and not on the nature of that intervention or agency, whether more or less complex, by which it is

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brought about. And should either term of the succession, either the antecedent or consequent, be some moral feeling, or characteristic of the mind, then the inference comes to be a very distinct and decisive one. That the sight of distress, for example, should be followed up by compassion, is an obvious provision of benevolence, and not of cruelty, on the part of Him who ordained our mental constitution. Again, that a feeling of kindness in the heart should be followed up by a feeling of complacency in the heart, that in every virtuous affection of the soul there should be so much to gladden and harmonize it, that there should always be peace within when there is conscious purity or rectitude within; and, on the other hand, that malignity and licentiousness, and the sense of any moral transgression whatever, should always have the effect of discomforting, and sometimes even of agonizing the spirit of man—that such should be the actual workmanship and working of our nature, speaks most distinctly, we apprehend, for the general righteousness of Him who constructed its machinery and established its laws. An omnipotent patron of vice would have given another make, and a moral system with other and opposite tendencies to the creatures whom he had formed. He would have established different sequences; and, instead of that oil of gladness which now distils, as if from a secret spring of satisfaction, upon the upright; and, instead of that bitterness and disquietude which are now the obvious attendants on every species of delinquency, we should have had the reverse phenomena of a reversely

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constituted species, whose minds were in their state of wildest disorder when kindling with the resolves of highest excellence; or were in their best and happiest, and most harmonious mood, when brooding over the purposes of dishonesty, or frenzied with the passions of hatred and revenge.

10. In this special track of observation, we have at least the means or data for constructing a far more satisfactory demonstration of the divine attributes, than can possibly be gathered, we think, from the ambiguous phenomena of the external world. In other words, it will be found that the mental phenomena speak more distinctly and decisively for the character of God than do the material phenomena of creation. And it should not be forgotten that whatever serves to indicate the character, serves also to confirm the existence of the Divine Being. For this character, whose signatures are impressed on nature, is not an abstraction, but must have residence on a concrete and substantive Being, who hath communicated a transcript of Himself to the workmanship of His own hands. It is thus, that, although in this special department there is greater poverty of evidence for a God, in as far as that evidence is grounded on a skilful disposition of parts,—yet, in respect of another kind of evidence, there is no such poverty; for, greatly more replete as we hold it to be with the unequivocal tokens of a moral character, we, by that simple but strong ligament of proof which connects a character with an existence, can, in the study of mind alone, find a firm stepping-stone to the existence of a God.

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Our universe is sometimes termed the mirror of Him who made it. But the optical reflection, whatever it may be, must be held as indicating the reality which gave it birth; and, whether we discern there the expression of a reigning benevolence, or a reigning justice, these must not be dealt with as the aerial or the fanciful personifications of qualities alone, but as the substantial evidences of a just and benevolent, and, withal, a living God. So that after all, if the constitution of our moral nature bear upon it decisive indications of the character of God, it must furnish at the same time strong indications of his Being. The discovery of a character implies the dicovery of an existence. We cannot separate qualities of any description from the proper substance in which they reside; and, if told of an absolute goodness and rightness in the economy of the universe, we cannot dissever our observation of such attributes as these from our belief of a good, and righteous, and withal a living Governor by whom they are realized.

11. But beside this peculiar evidence afforded by mind for the being of a God, we shall, in connexion with the study of its phenomena and its laws meet with much of that evidence, which lies in the manifold, and, withal, happy conjunction of many individual things, by the meeting together of which, some distinctly beneficial end is accomplished, brought about in that one way and in no other. For it ought further to be recollected, that, simple as the constitution of the human mind is, and proportionally unfruitful, therefore, as it may be of that argument for a God, which is

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founded on the right assortment and disposition of many parts, or even of many principles; yet, on reflection will it be found that the materials even of this peculiar argument lie abundantly within the province of this contemplation. For beside the mental constitution of man, we can view the adaptation of that constitution to external nature. We might demonstrate, not only that the mind is rightly constituted in itself, but that the mind is rightly placed in a befitting theatre for the exercise of its powers. We might prove of the world and its various objects that they are suited to the various capacities of this inhabitant—this moral and intelligent creature, of whom it is palpable that the things which are around him bear a fit relation to the laws or the properties which are within him. There is ample room here for the evidence of collocation. Yet there remains this distinction between the mental and coporeal economy of man, that whereas the evidence arising from collocation is more rich and manifold in the bodily structure itself, than even in its complex and numerous adaptations to the outer world;* the like evidence in the mental department, is meagre, as afforded by the subjective mind, when compared with the evidence of its various adjustments and fitnesses to the objective universe around it, whether of man's moral constitution to the state of human society, or of his intellectual to the various objects of physical investigation.

* Yet Paley has a most interesting chapter on the adaptations of external nature to the human framework, though the main strength and copiousness of his argument lie in the anatomy of the framework itself.

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12. The great object of philosophy is to ascertain the simple or ultimate principles, into which all the phenomena of nature may by analysis be resolved. But it often happens that in this attempt she stops short at a secondary law, which might be demonstrated by further analysis to be itself a complex derivative of the primitive or elementary laws. Until this work of analysis be completed, we shall often mistake what is compound for what is simple, both in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of matter—being frequently exposed to intractable substances or intractable phenomena in both, which long withstand every effort that science makes for their decomposition. It is thus that the time is not yet come, and may never come, when we shall fully understand what be all the simple elements or simple laws of matter; and what be all the distinct elementary laws, or, as they have sometimes been termed, the ultimate facts in the constitution of the human mind. But we do not need to wait for this communication, ere we can trace, in either department, the wisdom and beneficence of a Deity—for many are both the material and mental processes which might be recognised as pregnant with utility, and so, pregnant with evidence for a God, long before the processes themselves are analyzed. The truth is, that a secondary law, if it do not exhibit any additional proof of design in a distinct useful principle, exhibits that proof in a distinct and useful disposition of parts—for, generally speaking, a secondary law is the result of an operation by some primitive law, in peculiar and new circumstances. For example, the law of the tides

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is a secondary law, resolvable into one more general and elementary—even the law of gravitation. But we might imagine a state of things, in which the discovery of this connexion would have been impossible,—as a sky perpetually mantled with a cloudy envelopment, which, while it did not intercept the light either of the sun or moon, still hid these bodies from our direct observation. In these circumstances, the law of the tides and the law of gravitation, though identical in themselves, could not have been identified by us; and so, we might have ascribed this wholesome agitation of the sea and of the atmosphere to a distinct power or principle in nature—affording the distinct indication of both a kind and intelligent Creator. Now this inference is not annihilated—it is not even enfeebled by the discovery in question; for although the good arising from tides in the ocean and tides in the air, is not referable to a peculiar law—it is at least referable to a peculiar collocation. And this holds of all the useful secondary laws in the material world. If they cannot be alleged in evidence for the number of beneficial principles in nature—they can at least be alleged in evidence for the number of nature's beneficial arrangements. If they do not attest the multitude of useful properties, they at least attest the multitude of useful parts in nature; and the skill guided by benevolence which has been put forth in the distribution of them. So that long ere the philosophy of matter is perfected, or all its phenomena and its secondary laws have been resolved into their original and constituent principles—may we, in their obvious and immediate

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utility alone, detect as many separate evidences in nature as there are separate facts in nature, for a wise and benevolent Deity.

13. And the same will be found true of the secondary laws in the mental world, which, if not as many distinct beneficial principles in the constitution of the mind, are the effect of as many distinct and beneficial arrangements in the objects or circumstances by which it is surrounded. We have not to wait the completion of its still more subtle and difficult analysis, ere we come within sight of those varied indications of benevolent design which are so abundantly to be met with, both in the constitution of the mind itself, and in the adaptation thereto of external nature. Some there are, for example, who contend that the laws of taste are not primitive but secondary; that our admiration of beauty in material objects is resolvable into other and original emotions, and, more especially, by means of the associating principle, into our admiration of moral excellence. Let the justness of this doctrine be admitted; and its only effect on our peculiar argument is, that the benevolence of God in thus multiplying our enjoyments, instead of being indicated by a distinct law for suiting the human mind to the objects which surround it, is indicated both by the distribution of these objects and by their investment with such qualities as suit them to the previous constitution of the mind—that He hath pencilled them with the very colours, or moulded them into the very shapes which suggest either the graceful or the noble of human character; that He hath imparted to the

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violet its hue of modesty, and clothed the lily in its robe of purest innocence, and given to the trees of the forest their respective attitudes of strength or delicacy, and made the whole face of nature one bright reflection of those virtues which the mind and character of man had originally radiated. If it be not by the implantation of a peculiar law in mind, it is at least by a peculiar disposition of tints and forms in external nature, that He hath spread so diversified a loveliness over the panorama of visible things; and thrown so many walks of enchantment around us; and turned the sights and the sounds of rural scenery into the ministers of so much and such exquisite enjoyment; and caused the outer world of matter to image forth in such profusion those various qualities, which at first had pleased or powerfully affected us in the inner world of consciousness and thought. It is by the modifying operation of circumstances that a primary is transmuted into a secondary law; and if the blessings which we enjoy under it cannot be ascribed to the insertion of a distinct principle in the nature of man, they can at least be ascribed to a useful disposition of circumstances in the theatre around him.

14. In like manner there are some who would resolve our sense of property into an original instinct, an ultimate fact in the mental constitution; and then quote it as the distinct instance of a wise and beneficial ordination—connecting with it, as we have a right to do, all the advantages which accrue to society from the desire of property and from the respect for it which exists among men. Others

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again think they can reduce this appropriating tendency in the mind to a simpler and more primitive law; yet they do not thereby annihilate the evidence for design—for, if not a distinct principle in human nature, it is at least a distinct effect or development of that nature placed in circumstances which call forth this peculiar affection —to the obvious good of whole communities, in the stimulus given to industry, in the order and security attendant on a distribution which is the object of general acquiescence. The same observation applies to the relative affections, which may either be regarded as peculiar instincts of our nature, or as modifications of a simpler nature in peculiar circumstances. On either supposition we might still recognise the wisdom of a God, if not in the establishment of certain additional laws, in having implanted so many distinct and original feelings within the human breast—at least in the establishment of certain dispositions, in having arranged the human species into so many distinct families.

15. It is thus that philosophical discovery, which is felt by many to enfeeble the argument for a God, when it reduces two or more subordinate to simpler and anterior laws, does in fact leave that argument as entire as before—for if, by analysis, it diminish the number of beneficial properties whether in matter or mind, it replaces the injury which it may be supposed to have done in this way to the cause of theism, by presenting us with as great an additional number of beneficial arrangements in nature. And further, it may not be out of place to observe,

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that there appear to be two distinct ways by which an artificer might make manifest the wisdom of his contrivances. He may either be conceived of, as forming a substance and endowing it with the fit properties; or as finding a substance with certain given properties, and arranging it into fit dispositions for the accomplishment of some desirable end. Both the former and the latter of these we ascribe to the Divine Artificer—of whom we imagine, that He is the Creator as well as the Disposer of all things. It is only the latter that we can ascribe to the human artificer, who creates no substance, and ordains no property; but finds the substance with all its properties ready made and put into his hands, as the raw material out of which he fashions his implements and rears his structures of various design and workmanship. Now it is a commonly received, and has indeed been raised into a sort of universal maxim, that the highest property of wisdom is to achieve the most desirable end, or the greatest amount of good, by the fewest possible means, or by the simplest machinery. When this test is applied to the laws of nature—then we esteem it, as enhancing the manifestation of intelligence, that one single law, as gravitation, should, as from a central and commanding eminence, subordinate to itself a whole host of most important phenomena; or that from one great and parent property, so vast a family of beneficial consequences should spring. And when the same test is applied to the dispositions, whether of nature or art—then it enhances the manifestation of wisdom, when some great end is brought about with a less

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complex or cumbersome instrumentality, as often takes place in the simplification of machines, when, by the device of some ingenious ligament or wheel, the apparatus is made equally, perhaps more effective, whilst less unwieldy or less intricate than before. Yet there is one way in which, along with an exceeding complication in the mechanism, there might be given the impression of the very highest skill and capacity having been put forth on the contrivance of it. It is when, by means of a very operose and complex instrumentality, the triumph of art has been made all the more conspicuous, by a very marvellous result having been obtained out of very unpromising materials. It is true, that, in this case too, a still higher impression of skill would be given, if the same or a more striking result were arrived at, even after the intricacy of the machine had been reduced, by some happy device, in virtue of which certain of its parts or circumvolutions had been superseded; and thus, without injury to the final effect, so much of the complication had been dispensed with. Still, however, the substance, whether of the machine or the manufacture, may be conceived so very intractable as to put an absolute limit on any further simplification, or as to create an absolute necessity for all the manifold contrivance which had been expended on it. When this idea predominates in the mind—then all the complexity which we may behold, does not reduce our admiration of the artist, but rather deepens the sense that we have, both of the reconditeness of his wisdom, and of the wondrous vastness and variety of his

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resources. It is the extreme wideness of the contrast, between the sluggishness of matter, and the fineness of the results in physiology, which so enhances our veneration for the great Architect of Nature, when we behold the exquisite organizations of the animal and vegetable kingdoms.* The two exhibitions are wholly distinct from each other—yet each of them may be perfect in its own way. The first is held forth to us, when one law of pervading generality is found to scatter a myriad of beneficent consequences in its train. The second is held forth, when, by an indefinite complexity of means, a countless variety of expedients with their multiform combinations, some one design, such as the upholding of life in plants or animals is accomplished. Creation presents us in marvellous profusion with specimens of both these—at once confirming the doctrine, and illustrating the significancy of the expression in which Scripture hath conveyed it to us, when it tells of the *manifold* wisdom of God.

16. But while, on a principle already often recognised, this multitude of necessary conditions to the accomplishment of a given end, enhances the argument for a God, because each separate condition reduces the hypothesis of chance to a more violent improbability than before; yet it must not be disguised that there is a certain transcendental mystery which it has the effect of aggravating, and which it leaves unresolved. We can understand the com-

* Dr. Paley would state the problem thus. The laws of matter being given, so to organize it, as that it shall produce or sustain the phenomena, whether of vegetation or of life.

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plex machinery and the circuitous processes to which a human artist must resort, that he might overcome the else uncomplying obstinacy of inert matter, and bend it in subserviency to his special designs. But that the Divine Artist who first created the matter and ordained its laws, should find the same complication necessary for the accomplishment of His puposes; that such an elaborate workmanship, for example, should be required to establish the functions of sight and hearing in the animal economy, is very like the lavish or ostensible ingenuity of a Being employed in conquering the difficulty which himself had raised. It is true, the one immediate purpose is served by it which we have just noticed—that of presenting, as it were, to the eye of inquirers a more manifold inscription of the Divinity. But if, instead of being the object of inference, it had pleased God to make himself the object of a direct manifestation, then for the mere purpose of becoming known to his creatures, this reflex or circuitous method of revelation would have been altogether uncalled for. That under the actual system of creation, and with its actual proofs, He has made His existence most decisively known to us, we most thankfully admit. But when question is made between the actual and the conceivable systems of creation which God might have created, we are forced to confess, that the very circumstances which, in the existing order of things, have brightened and enhanced the evidence of His being, have also cast a deeper secrecy over what may be termed the general policy of His government and ways. And this is but one of the

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many difficulties, which men of unbridled speculation and unobservant of that sound philosophy that keeps within the limits of human observation, will find it abundantly possible to conjure up on the field of natural theism. It does look an impracticable enigma that the Omnipotent God, who could have grafted all the capacities of thought and feeling on an elementary atom, should have deemed fit to incorporate the human soul in the midst of so curious and complicated a framework. For what a variegated structure is man's animal economy. What an apparatus of vessels and bones and ligaments. What a complex mechanism. What an elaborate chemistry. What a multitude of parts in the anatomy, and of processes in the physiology of this marvellous system. What a medley, we had almost said, what a package of contents. What an unwearied play of secretions and circulations and other changes incessant and innumerable. In short, what a laborious complication; and all to uphold a living principle, which, one might think, could by a simple fiat of omnipotence, have sprung forth at once from the great source and centre of the spiritual system, and mingled with the world of spirits—just as each new particle of light is sent forth by the emanation of a sunbeam, to play and glisten among fields of radiance.

17. But to recall ourselves from this digression among the possibilities of what might have been, to the realities of the mental system, such as it actually is. Ere we bring the very general observations of this chapter to a close, we would

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briefly notice an analogy between the realities of the mental and those of the corporeal system. The inquirers into the latter have found it of substantial benefit to their science to have mixed up with the prosecution of it a reference to final causes. Their reasoning on the likely uses of a part in anatomy, has, in some instances, suggested or served as a guide to speculations, which have been at length verified by a discovery. We believe, in like manner, that reasoning on the likely or obvious uses of a principle in the constitution of the human mind, might lead, if not to the discovery, at least to the confirmation of important truth—not perhaps in the science itself, but in certain of the cognate sciences which stand in no very distant relation to it. For example, we think it should rectify certain errors which have been committed both in jurisprudence and political economy, if it can be demonstrated that some of the undoubted laws of human nature are traversed by them; and so, that violence is thereby done to the obvious designs of the Author of Nature. We do not hold it out of place, though we notice one or two of these instances, by which it might be seen that the mental philosophy, when studied in connexion with the palpable views of Him by whom all its principles and processes were ordained, is fitted to enlighten the practice of legislation, and more especially to determine the wisdom of certain arrangements which have for their object the economic well-being of society.

18. Whatever may be thought of the relative strength of the argument for a God, as drawn first

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from the material and then from the mental world —we cannot but feel that in the latter, there is, if not a superior strength, at least a superior and surpassing dignity. The superiority of mind to matter has often been the theme of eloquence to moralists. For what were all the wonders of the latter and all its glories, without a spectator mind that could intelligently view and that could tastefully admire them? Let every eye be irrevocably closed, and this were equivalent to the entire annihilation in nature of the element of light; and in like manner, if the light of all consciousness were put out in the world of mind, the world of matter, though as rich in beauty, and in the means of benevolence as before, were thereby reduced to a virtual non-entity. In these circumstances, the lighting up again of even but one mind would restore its being, or at least its significancy, to that system of materialism, which, untouched itself, had just been desolated of all those beings in whom it could kindle reflection, or to whom it could minister the sense of enjoyment. It were tantamount to the second creation of it—or, in other words, one living intelligent spirit is of higher reckoning and mightier import than a dead universe.

CHAP. II.

On the Supremacy of Conscience.

1. An abstract question in morals is distinct from a question respecting the constitution of man's

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moral nature; and the former ought no more to be confounded with the latter, than the truths of geometry with the faculties of the reasoning mind which comprehends them. The virtuousness of justice was a stable doctrine in ethical science, anterior to the existence of the species; and would remain so, though the species were destroyed—just as much as the properties of a triangle are the enduring stabilities of mathematical science; and that, though no matter had been created to exemplify the positions or the figures of geometry. The objective nature of virtue is one thing. The subjective nature of the human mind, by which virtue is felt and recognised, is another. It is not from the former, any more than from the eternal truths of geometry, that we can demonstrate the existence or attributes of God—but from the latter, as belonging to the facts of a creation emanating from His will, and therefore bearing upon it the stamp of His character. The nature and constitution of virtue form a distinct subject of inquiry from the nature and constitution of the human mind. Virtue is not a creation of the Divine will, but has had everlasting residence in the nature of the Godhead. The mind of man is a creation; and therefore indicates, by its characteristics, the character of Him, to the fiat and the forthgoing of whose will it owes its existence. We must frequently, in the course of this discussion, advert to the principles of ethics; but it is not on the system of ethical doctrine that our argument properly is founded. It is on the phenomena and the laws of actual human nature, which itself, one of the great facts of crea-

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tion, may be regarded like all its facts, as bearing on it the impress of that mind which gave birth to creation.

2. But further. It is not only not with the system of ethical doctrine—it is not even with the full system of the philosophy of our nature that we have properly to do. On this last there is still a number of unsettled questions; but our peculiar argument does not need to wait for the conclusive determination of them. For example, there is many a controversy among philosophers respecting the primary and secondary laws of the human constitution. Now, if it be an obviously beneficial law, it carries evidence for a God, in the mere existence and operation of it, independently of the rank which it holds, or of the relation in which it stands to the other principles, of our internal mechanism. It is thus that there may, at one and the same time, be grounded on the law in question a clear theological inference; and yet there may be associated with it an obscure philosophical speculation. It is well that we separate these two; and, more especially, that the decisive attestation given by any part or phenomenon of our nature to the Divine goodness, shall not be involved in the mist and metaphysical perplexity of other reasonings, the object of which is altogether distinct and separate from our own. The facts of the human constitution, apart altogether from the philosophy of their causation, demonstrate the wisdom and benevolence of Him who framed it: and while it is our part to follow the light of this philosophy, as far as the light and the guidance of it are sure, we

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are not, in those cases, when the final cause is obvious as day, though the proximate efficient cause should be hidden in deepest mystery—we are not, on this account, to confound darkness with light, or light with darkness.

3. By attending throughout to this observation, we shall be saved from a thousand irrelevancies as well as obscurities of argument; and it is an observation peculiarly applicable, in announcing that great fact or phenomenon of mind, which, for many reasons, should hold a foremost place in our demonstration. We mean the felt supremacy of conscience—a phenomenon of much greater weight and prominency than are commonly assigned to it in the demonstrations of Natural Theism—a phenomenon without which we should, in the multitude of processes around us with the infinite diversity of their effects, feel ourselves but as in a world of enigmas; but which, singly and of itself, serves the office of a great light to overrule the cross or contradictory intimations that are given by the lesser ones. Philosophers there are, who have attempted to resolve this fact into ulterior or ultimate ones in the mental constitution; and who have denied to the faculty a place among its original and uncompounded principles. Sir James Macintosh tells us of the generation of human conscience; and, not merely states, but endeavours to explain the phenomenon of its felt supremacy within us. Dr. Adam Smith also assigns a pedigree to our moral judgments; but, with all his peculiar notions respecting the origin of the awards of conscience, he never once disputes their authority; or, that, by

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the general consent of mankind, this authority is, in sentiment and opinion at least, conceded to them.* It is somewhat like an antiquarian controversy respecting the first formation and subsequent historical changes of some certain court of government, the rightful authority of whose decisions and acts is, at the same time, fully recognised. And so, philosophers have disputed regarding the court of conscience—of what materials it is constructed, and by what line of genealogy from the anterior principles of our nature it has sprung. Yet most of these have admitted the proper right of sovereignty which belongs to it; its legitimate place as the master and the arbiter over all the appetites and desires and practical forces of human nature. Or, if any have dared the singularity of denying this, they do so in opposition to the general sense and general language of mankind, whose very modes of speech compel them to affirm that the biddings of conscience are of paramount authority—its peculiar office being to tell what all men should, or all men ought to do.

4. The proposition, however, which we are now

* "Upon whatever," observes Dr. Adam Smith, "we suppose our moral faculties to be founded, whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they were given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of this authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions, to superintend all our senses, passions and appetites, and to judge how far each of them was either to be indulged or restrained. It is the peculiar office of these faculties to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature."—*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part iii. chap. v.

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urging, is not that the obligations of virtue are binding, but that man has a conscience which tells him that they are so—not that justice and truth and humanity are the dogmata of the abstract moral system, but that they are the dictates of man's moral nature—not that in themselves they are the constituent parts of moral rectitude, but that there is a voice within every heart which thus pronounces on them. It is not with the constitution of morality, viewed objectively, as a system or theory of doctrine, that we have properly to do; but with the constitution of man's spirit, viewed as the subject of certain phenomena and laws—and, more particularly, with a great psychological fact in human nature, namely, the homage rendered by it to the supremacy of conscience. In a word, it is not of a category, but of a creation that we are speaking. The one can tell us nothing of the Divine character, while the other might afford most distinct and decisive indications of it. We could found no demonstration whatever of the Divine purposes, on a mere ethical, any more than we could, on a logical or mathematical category. But it is very different with an actual creation, whether in mind or in matter—a mechanism of obvious contrivance, and whose workings and tendencies, therefore, must be referred to the design, and so to the disposition or character of that Being, whose spirit hath devised and whose fingers have framed it.

5. For it is not an abstract question in Moral Science that we are now discussing. It is a question of Fact, respecting man's moral nature—

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and as much to be decided by observation as the nature or properties of any substantive being. It is a Fact which we learn or become acquainted with, just as we become acquainted with the constitution of a watch by the inspection of its mechanism. Conscience in Man is as much a thing of observation —as the regulator in a watch is a thing of observation. It depends for its truth, therefore, on an independent and abiding evidence of its own, under all the diversities of speculation on the nature of Virtue. By the supremacy of Conscience we affirm a truth which respects not the nature of Virtue but the nature of Man. It is, that in every human heart, there is a faculty—not, it may be, having the actual power, but having the just and rightful pretension to sit as judge and master over the whole of human conduct. Other propensities may have too much sway—but the moral propensity, if I may so term it, never can—for to have the presiding sway in all our concerns, is just that which properly and legitimately belongs to it. A man under anger may be too strongly prompted to deeds of retaliation—or under sensuality be too strongly prompted to indulgence—or under avarice be too closely addicted to the pursuit of wealth—or even under friendship be too strongly inclined to partiality —but he never can under conscience be too strongly inclined to be as he ought and to do as he ought. We may say of a watch that its main-spring is too powerful: but we would never say that a Regulator is too powerful. We may complain of each of its other parts that it has too much influence over the rest—but not that the part whose office it is to

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regulate and fix the rate of going has too much influence. And just as a watch cannot move too regularly, man cannot walk too conscientiously. The one cannot too much obey its regulator—the other cannot too much obey his conscience. In other words, Conscience is the rightful Sovereign in man—and if any other, in the character of a ruling passion, be the actual Sovereign—it is an usurper. In the former case, the mind is felt to be in its proper and well-conditioned state; in the latter case, it is felt to be in a state of anarchy. Yet even in that anarchy, Conscience though despoiled of its authority, still lifts its remonstrating claims. Though deprived of its rights, it continues to assert them. Long after being stripped of its dominion over man, it still has its dwelling-place in his bosom; and even when most in practice disregarded, then it makes itself to be felt and heard.

6. The supremacy of Conscience does not seem to have been sufficiently adverted to by Dr. Thomas Brown. He treats the moral feeling rather as an individual emotion which takes its part in the enumeration along with others in his list, than as the great master-emotion that is not appeased but by its ascendancy over them all. Now, instead of a single combatant in the play of many others, and which will only obtain the victory, if physically of greater power and force; it should be viewed as separate and signalized from the rest by its own felt and inherent claim of superiority over them. Each emotion hath its own characteristic object wherewith it is satisfied. But the specific object of this emotion is the regulation of all the active

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powers of the soul—and without this, it is not satisfied. The distinction made by the sagacious Butler between the power of a principle and its authority, enables us in the midst of all the actual anomalies and disorders of our state, to form a precise estimate of the place which Conscience naturally and rightfully holds in man's constitution. The desire of acting virtuously, which is a desire consequent on our sense of right and wrong, may not be of equal strength with the desire of some criminal indulgence—and so, practically, the evil may preponderate over the good. And thus it is that the system of the inner man, from the weakness of that which claims to be the ascendant principle of our nature may be thrown into a state of turbulence and disorder. So it may happen of a system of Civil Government—and just, from the real power and the rightful authority being dissevered the one from the other. But still this does not hinder there being a rightful authority somewhere—and that it may have existence, although it may not have force to carry the execution of its dictates. It is the very same of the Government within. There might be pride and passion and sensuality and the love of ease, and a thousand more affections each having their own object and their own degree of strength—and withal a Conscience that claims the supremacy over all these; but which often of inferior strength to them all may suffer them to lord it over that domain of which it rightfully is the master and proprietor. To it belongs the mastery—although the mastery is often wrongfully taken away from it. But still our urgent

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and unescapeable sense of the wrong; our remorse and self-dissatisfaction when conscience is disobeyed; the happiness and harmony which are felt within, when the voice of authority which it emits is also a voice of power; the well-conditioned state of the soul, when the moral faculty overrules all, and subordinates all—these are so many badges of the proper and native supremacy of Conscience; and they evince that its part and office in the mechanism of our moral system is to act as regulator of the whole.

7. And neither do we urge the proposition that conscience has in every instance the actual direction of human affairs, for this were in the face of all experience. It is not that every man obeys her dictates, but that every man feels he ought to obey them. These dictates are often in life and practice disregarded: so that conscience is not the sovereign *de facto*. Still there is a voice within the hearts of all which asserts that conscience is the sovereign *de jure;* that to her belongs the command rightfully, even though she do not possess it actually. In a season of national anarchy, the actual power and the legitimate authority are often disjoined from each other. The lawful monarch may be dethroned, and so lose the might; while he continues to possess—nay, while he may be acknowledged throughout his kingdom to possess the right of sovereignty. The distinction still is made, even under this reign of violence, between the usurper and the lawful sovereign; and there is a similar distinction among the powers and principles of the human constitution, when an insurrection takes

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place of the inferior against the superior; and conscience, after being dethroned from her place of mastery and control, is still felt to be the superior, or rather supreme faculty of our nature notwithstanding. She may have fallen from her dominion, yet still wear the badges of a fallen sovereign, having the acknowledged right of authority, though the power of enforcement has been wrested away from her. She may be outraged in all her prerogatives by the lawless appetites of our nature—but not without the accompanying sense within of an outrage and a wrong having been inflicted, and a reclaiming voice from thence which causes itself to be heard and which remonstrates against it. The insurgent and inferior principles of our constitution may, in the uproar of their wild mutiny, lift a louder and more effective voice than the small still voice of conscience. They have the might but not the right. Conscience, on the other hand, is felt to have the right though not the might—the legislative office being that which properly belongs to her, though the executive power should be wanting to enforce her enactments. It is not the reigning but the rightful authority of conscience that we, under the name of her supremacy, contend for; or, rather the fact that, by the consent of all our higher principles and feelings, this rightful authority is reputed to be hers; and, by the general concurrence of mankind awarded to her.

8. And here it is of capital importance to distinguish between an original and proper tendency, and a subsequent aberration. This has been well illustrated by the regulator of a watch, whose office

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and primary design, and that obviously announced by the relation in which it stands to the other parts of the machinery, is to control the velocity of its movements. And we should still perceive this to have been its destination, even though, by accident or decay, it had lost the power of command which at the first belonged to it. We should not misunderstand the purpose of its maker, although, in virtue of some deterioration or derangement which the machinery had undergone, that purpose were now frustrated. And we could discern the purpose in the very make and constitution of the mechanism. We might even see it to be an irregular watch; and yet this needs not prevent us from seeing, that, at its original fabrication, it was made for the purpose of moving regularly. The mere existence and position of the regulator might suffice to indicate this—although it had become powerless, either from the wearing of the parts, or from some extrinsic disturbance to which the instrument had been exposed. The regulator, in this instance, may be said to have the right, though not the power of command, over the movements of the time-piece; yet the loss of the power has not obliterated the vestiges of the right; so that, by the inspection of the machinery alone, we both learn the injury which has been done to it, and the condition in which it originally came from the hand of its maker—a condition of actual as well as rightful supremacy, on the part of the regulator, over all its movements. And a similar discovery may be made, by examination of the various parts and principles which make up the moral system of man: for we see various

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parts and principles there. We see Ambition, having power for its object, and without the attainment of which it is not satisfied; and Avarice, having wealth for its object, without the attainment of which it is not satisfied; and Benevolence, having for its object the good of others, without the attainment of which it is not satisfied; and the love of Reputation, having for its object their applause, without which it is not satisfied; and lastly, to proceed no further in the enumeration, Conscience, which surveys and superintends the whole man, whose distinct and appropriate object it is to have the entire control both of his inward desires and outward doings, and without the attainment of this it is thwarted from its proper aim, and remains unsatisfied. Each appetite, or affection of our nature, has its own distinct object; but this last is the object of Conscience, which may be termed the moral affection. The place which it occupies, or rather which it is felt that it should occupy, and which naturally belongs to it, is that of a governor, claiming the superiority, and taking to itself the direction over all the other powers and passions of humanity. If this superiority be denied to it, there is a felt violence done to the whole economy of man. The sentiment is, that the thing is not as it should be: and even after conscience is forced, in virtue of some subsequent derangement, from this station of rightful ascendancy, we can still distinguish between what is the primitive design or tendency, and what is the posterior aberration. We can perceive, in the case of a deranged or distempered watch, that the mechanism is out of order; but even then, on

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the bare examination of its workmanship, and more especially from the place and bearing of its regulator, can we pronounce that it was made for moving regularly. And in like manner, on the bare inspection of our mental economy alone, and more particularly from the place which conscience has there, can we, even in the case of the man who refuses to obey its dictates, affirm that he was made for walking conscientiously.

9. The distinction which we now labour to establish between conscience, and the other principles of our nature, does not respect the actual force or prevalence which may, or may not, severally belong to them. It respects the universal judgment which, by the very constitution of our nature, is passed on the question, which of all these should have the prevalence, whenever there happens to be a contest between them. All which we affirm is, that if conscience prevail over the other principles, then every man is led, by the very make and mechanism of his internal economy, to feel that this is as it ought to be; or, if these others prevail over conscience, that this is not as it ought to be. One, it is generally felt, may be too ambitious, or too much set on wealth and fame, or too resentful of injury, or even too facile in his benevolence, when carried to the length of being injudicious and hurtful; but no one is ever felt, if he have sound and enlightened views of morality, to be too conscientious. When we affirm this of conscience, we but concur in the homage rendered to it by all men, as being the rightful, if not the actual superior, among all the feelings and faculties of our nature. It is a truth,

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perhaps, too simple for being reasoned; but this is because, like many of the most important and undoubted certainties of human belief, it is a truth of instant recognition. When stating the supremacy of conscience, in the sense that we have explained it, we but state what all men feel; and our only argument, in proof of the assertion, is—our only argument can be, an appeal to the experience of all men.

10. Bishop Butler has often been spoken of as the first discoverer of this great principle in our nature; though, perhaps, no man can properly be said to discover what all men are conscious of. But certain it is, that he is the first who hath made the natural supremacy of conscience the subject of a full and reflex cognizance—and by this achievement alone hath become the author of one of the most important contributions ever made to moral science. It forms the argument of his three first sermons, in a volume which may safely be pronounced, the most precious repository of sound ethical principles extant in any language. The authority of conscience, says Dugald Stewart, "although beautifully described by many of the ancient moralists, was not sufficiently attended to by modern writers, as a fundamental principle in the science of ethics, till the time of Dr. Butler." It belongs to the very essence of the principle, that we clearly distinguish, between what we find to be the actual force of conscience, and what we feel to be its rightful authority. These two may exist in a state of separation from each other just as in a Civil Government, the reigning power may, in sea-

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sons of anarchy, be dissevered from that supreme court or magistrate to whom it rightfully belongs. The mechanism of a political fabric is not adequately or fully described by the mere enumeration of its parts. There must also enter into the description, the relation which the parts bear to each other; and more especially, the paramount relation of rightful ascendancy and direction, which that part, in which the functions of Government are vested, bears to the whole. Neither is the mechanism of man's personal constitution fully or adequately described, by merely telling us in succession the several parts of which it is composed—as the passions, and the appetites, and the affections, and the moral sense, and the intellectual capacities, which make up this complex and variously gifted creature. The particulars of his mental system must not only be stated, each in their individuality; but the bearing or connexion which each has with the rest—else it is not described as a system at all. In making out this description, we should not only not overlook the individual faculty of conscience, but we must not overlook its relative place among the other feelings and faculties of our nature. That place is the place of command. What conscience lays claim to is the mastery or regulation over the whole man. Each desire of our nature rests or terminates in its own appropriate object, as the love of fame in applause, or hunger in food, or revenge in the infliction of pain upon its object, or affection for another in the happiness and company of the beloved individual. But the object of the moral sense is to arbitrate and direct among all

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these propensities. It claims the station and the prerogative of a mistress over them. Its peculiar office is that of superintendence, and there is a certain feeling of violence or disorder, when the mandates which it issues in this capacity, are not carried into effect. Every affection in our nature is appeased by the object that is suited to it. The object of conscience is the subordination of the whole to its dictates. Without this it remains unappeased, and as if bereft of its rights. It is not a single faculty, taking its own separate and unconnected place among the other feelings and faculties which belong to us. Its proper place is that of a guide or a governor. It is the ruling power in our nature; and its proper, its legitimate business, is to prescribe that man shall be as he ought, and do as he ought. But instead of expatiating any further at present in language of our own, let us here admit a few brief sentences from Butler himself, that great and invaluable expounder both of the human constitution, and of moral science. "That principle by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper, and actions, is not only to be considered as what in its turn is to have some influence, which may be said of every passion, of the basest appetites: but likewise as being superior; as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty conscience, without taking in judgment direction and superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is of the faculty itself: and to preside and govern, from the very economy

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and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority; it would absolutely govern the world." "This faculty was placed within us to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office. Thus sacred is its authority. And how often soever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no alteration as to the *natural right* and *office* of conscience." "As the idea of a civil constitution implies in it united strength, various subordinations under one direction that of the supreme authority, the different strength of each particular member of the society not coming into the idea; whereas if you leave out the subordination, the union, and the one direction, you lose it; so reason, several appetites, passions and affections, prevailing in different degrees of strength, is not that idea or notion of human nature, which is meant when virtue is said to consist in following it, and vice in deviating from it; but that nature consists in these several principles considered as having a natural respect to each other, in the several passions being naturally subordinate to the one superior principle of reflection or conscience. Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: Add to these the superior faculty, whose office it is to adjust, manage and preside over them, and take in this its natural superiority, and you complete the

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idea of human nature. And as in civil government the constitution is broken in upon, and violated by power and strength prevailing over authority; so the constitution of man is broken in upon and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that, which is in its nature supreme over them all. Thus when it is said by ancient writers, that tortures and death are not so contrary to human nature as injustice; by this, to be sure, is not meant, that the aversion to the former in mankind is less strong and prevalent than their aversion to the latter: But that the former is only contrary to our nature considered in a partial view, and which takes in only the lowest part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature, considered in a higher sense, as a system and constitution, contrary to the whole economy of man." The conclusion on the whole is—that "man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, human wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in; But that from his make, constitution, or nature, he is, in the strictest and most proper sense, a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within: What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it."

11. Now it is in these phenomena of Conscience that Nature offers to us, far her strongest argument, for the moral character of God. Had He been an unrighteous Being himself, would He have given to this the obviously superior faculty in man, so

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distinct and authoritative a voice on the side of righteousness? Would He have so constructed the creatures of our species, as to have planted in every breast a reclaiming witness against himself? Would He have thus inscribed on the tablet of every heart the sentence of his own condemnation; and is not this just as unlikely, as that He should have inscribed it in written characters on the forehead of each individual? Would He so have fashioned the workmanship of His own hands; or, if a God of cruelty, injustice, and falsehood, would He have placed in the station of master and judge that faculty which, felt to be the highest in our nature, would prompt a generous and high-minded revolt of all our sentiments against the Being who formed us? From a God possessed of such characteristics, we should surely have expected a differently-moulded humanity; or, in other words, from the actual constitution of man, from the testimonies on the side of all righteousness, given by the vicegerent within the heart, do we infer the righteousness of the Sovereign who placed it there. He would never have established a conscience in man, and invested it with the authority of a monitor, and given to it those legislative and judicial functions which it obviously possesses; and then so framed it, that all its decisions should be on the side of that virtue which He himself disowned, and condemnatory of that vice which He himself exemplified. This is an evidence for the righteousness of God, which keeps its ground, amid all the disorders and aberrations to which humanity is liable; and can no more, indeed, be

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deafened or overborne by these, than is the rightful authority of public opinion, by the occasional outbreakings of iniquity and violence which take place in society. This public opinion may, in those seasons of misrule when might prevails over right, be deforced from the practical ascendancy which it ought to have; but the very sentiment that it so ought, is our reason for believing the world to have been originally formed, in order that virtue might have the rule over it. In like manner, when, in the bosom of every individual man, we can discern a conscience, placed there with the obvious design of being a guide and a commander, it were difficult not to believe, that, whatever the partial outrages may be which the cause of virtue has to sustain, it has the public mind of the universe in its favour; and that therefore He, who is the Maker and the Ruler of such a universe, is a God of righteousness. Amid all the subsequent deteriorations and errors, the original design, both of a deranged watch and of a deranged human nature, is alike manifest; first, of the maker of the watch, that its motions should harmonize with time; second, of the maker of man, that his movements should harmonize with truth and righteousness. We can, in most cases, discern between an aberration and an original law; between a direct or primitive tendency and the effect of a disturbing force, by which that tendency is thwarted and overborne. And so of the constitution of man. It may be now a loosened and disproportioned thing, yet we can trace the original structure—even as from the fragments of a ruin,

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we can obtain the perfect model of a building from its capital to its base. It is thus that, however prostrate conscience may have fallen, we can still discern its place of native and original pre-eminence, as being at once the legislator and the judge in the moral system, though the executive forces of the system have made insurrection against it, and thrown the whole into anarchy. By studying the constitution, or what Butler calls the make of any thing, we may divine the purpose of the Maker. No one can mistake the design of the artificer in putting a regulator into a watch. It was to make it move regularly. And as little should we mistake the design of the Creator in putting a Conscience into man's bosom. It was to make him walk conscientiously. Even although from some derangement in the machinery, the regulator had lost its power of control—yet from its plan of control the original purpose of it may still be abundantly manifest. And in like manner, though from the unhingement of man's moral economy, Conscience may have fallen from the actual sway, it still bespeaks itself to be a fallen sovereign, and that the place of sovereignty is that which natively and rightfully belongs to it. When what is obviously the regulating power has quitted its hold, whether of the material or the spiritual mechanism, we distinctly recognise of each that it is not in its natural state but in a state of disorder, arising in the one case from the wear of the materials or from some shake that the machinery has received, arising in the other case either from some incidental disturbance, or from some inherent frailty and defect

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that attaches to the creature. There is a depth of mystery in every thing connected with the existence and origin of evil in creation; yet, even in the fiercest uproar of our stormy passions, Conscience, though in her softest whispers, gives to the supremacy of rectitude the voice of an undying testimony; and her light still shining in a dark place, her unquelled accents still heard in the loudest outcry of Nature's rebellious appetites, form the strongest argument within reach of the human faculties, that, in spite of all partial or temporary derangements, Supreme Power and Supreme Goodness are at one. It is true that rebellious man hath, with daring footstep, trampled on the lessons of Conscience; but why, in spite of man's perversity, is conscience, on the other hand, able to lift a voice so piercing and so powerful, by which to remonstrate against the wrong, and to reclaim the honours that are due to her? How comes it that, in the mutiny and uproar of the inferior faculties, that faculty in man, which wears the stamp and impress of the highest, should remain on the side of truth and holiness? Would humanity have thus been moulded by a false and evil spirit; or would he have committed such impolicy against himself, as to insert in each member of our species a principle which would make him feel the greatest complacency in his own rectitude, when he feels the most high-minded revolt of indignation and dislike against the Being who gave him birth? It is not so much that Conscience takes a part among the other faculties of our nature; but that Conscience takes among them the part of a governor, and that man, if he do not obey her

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suggestions, still, in despite of himself, acknowledges her rights. It is a mighty argument for the virtue of the Governor above, that all the laws and injunctions of the governor below are on the side of virtue. It seems as if He had left this representative, or remaining witness, for Himself, in a world that had cast off its allegiance; and that, from the voice of the judge within the breast, we may learn the will and the character of Him who hath invested with such authority His dictates. It s this which speaks as much more demonstratively ior the presidency of a righteous God in human affairs, than for that of impure or unrighteous demons, as did the rod of Aaron, when it swallowed the rods of the enchanters and magicians in Egypt. In the wildest anarchy of man's insurgent appetites and sins, there is still a reclaiming voice—a voice which, even when in practice disregarded, it is impossible not to own; and to which, at the very moment that we refuse our obedience, we find that we cannot refuse the homage of what we ourselves do feel and acknowledge to be the best, the highest principles of our nature.

12. The question then is, would any other than a God of righteousness have made creatures of such a moral constitution at the first—and, however inexplicable its subsequent derangement may be, would He have left a conscience in every breast which gave such powerful testimony to the worth and the permanent importance of morality? Shaded in all its original lineaments as the character of man now is, and dethroned although virtue be from the actual sovereignty, is there not still

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amongst us a general and abiding sense of her rightful sovereignty? Would even this imperfect but universal homage continue to be given, were it a wicked Being who presided over the great family of Nature, or breathed life and spirit and sentiment into the human framework? Would He have placed so deeply within us that faculty by which as if with moral compulsion we are constrained to hold in supreme reverence, the goodness which in all its characteristics is the reverse and the counterpart of his own nature? Would He have endowed the creatures which himself hath made with an admiration of all that is most opposite to himself—and how, if He be unrighteous hath He put into every bosom such an indelible sense of the obligation and precedency of righteousness? Righteousness does not bear actual and unexcepted rule in the world—but there is a conscience in every man which proclaims that this rule it ought to have, and that though wrested from it, it is by the force of principles which are felt to be in their own nature inferior to Conscience. Had there been no Conscience in man, each propensity may at times have had its own temporary sway—as if gods of unequal strength shared the dominion over them. But there being a Conscience, invested with a rightful if not with an actual ascendancy which still keeps a remaining hold of our nature, and within the recesses of a Moral System, in evident disorder still causes its voice to be heard—this phenomenon, of itself, gives a blow to impure Polytheism, or at least degrades each member thereof to the rank of an inferior deity. The question is whether He be

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a good or an evil spirit who presides over the destinies of our species. Were he an unrighteous God who has full sway over us, why is Conscience, that faculty which disowns unrighteousness and outlaws it, permitted by him to assume the rank of an arbiter and not only to speak but to speak as one having authority? If the actual Artificer of man's moral mechanism be a wicked or a malignant spirit, it seems inexplicable that he should have placed such a judge and arbiter within us—one who bore constant testimony against the wrongness and the worthlessness of his own character. Thus to have written reproach against himself in every heart is just as inexplicable as if he had legibly written his own disgrace upon every forehead. It is true on the other hand, that if he be a righteous God who governs our world, Humanity is in a state of revolt against him—the result however not of the principles but of the passions, or of what Humanity itself judges and feels to be the inferior of its faculties—still He is borne witness to by that within the breast which claims to be the superior, the supreme faculty, and which obviously announces itself to be if not *de facto*, at least *de jure* the ruling power.

13. However difficult from the very simplicity of the subject it may be, to state or to reason the argument for a God, which is founded on the supremacy of Conscience, still historically and experimentally, it will be found, that it is of more force than all other arguments put together, for originating and upholding the natural theism which there is in the world. The theology of Conscience

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is not only of wider diffusion, but of far more practical influence than the theology of academic demonstration. The ratiocination by which this theology is established, is not the less firm or the less impressive, that, instead of a lengthened process, there is but one step between the premises and the conclusion—or, that the felt presence of a judge within the breast, powerfully and immediately suggests the notion of a Supreme Judge and Sovereign, who placed it there. Upon this question, the mind does not stop short at mere abstraction; but, passing at once from the abstract to the concrete, from the law of the heart it makes the rapid inference of a lawgiver. It is the very rapidity of this inference which makes it appear like intuition; and which has given birth to the mystic theology of innate ideas. Yet the theology of Conscience disclaims such mysticism, built, as it is, on a foundation of sure and sound reasoning; for the strength of an argumentation in nowise depends upon the length of it. The sense of a governing principle within, begets in all men the sentiment of a living Governor without and above them, and it does so with all the speed of an instantaneous feeling; yet it is not an impression, it is an inference notwithstanding—and as much so as any inference from that which is seen, to that which is unseen. There is, in the first instance, cognizance taken of a fact—if not by the outward eye, yet as good, by the eye of consciousness which has been termed the faculty of internal observation. And the consequent belief of a God, instead of being an instinctive sense of the Divinity, is the

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fruit of an inference grounded on that fact. There is instant transition made, from the sense of a Monitor within to the faith of a living Sovereign above; and this argument, described by all, but with such speed as almost to warrant the expression of its being felt by all, may be regarded, notwithstanding the force and fertility of other considerations, as the great prop of natural religion among men.

14. At all events it is of the utmost value in Theology—that there should be so much of Truth and of supremely important Truth placed so near us as to be laid hold of immediately by the mind; without the intervention of reasoning and without any sensible exertion on the part of the discursive faculty, or of that faculty by which it is, that we arrive at some distant conclusion by a train of inferences. Such for example are those truths which are seen, not merely in the light of the external senses but in the light of consciousness, and which instantly become manifest on the attention of the mind being turned towards them. There needs in these instances no lengthened argumentation to carry the belief—for the thing in question becomes palpable by our own vivid and intimate consciousness of our own nature. The supremacy of Conscience is one of those truths—not come at by a series of stepping-stones—but seen at once, in the light of what may be termed an instant manifestation. Now certain it is, that this Fact or Phenomenon in our nature, depones strongly both for a God and for the supreme righteousness of His Nature. But it depones to

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these immediately; or, at most, there is but one inferential step which leads from the consciousness of what we feel to be in ourselves, to the impression of what we apprehend to be in Him from whom we derived our constitution and our being. There may here be one transition from the premises to the conclusion—but done with such rapidity by the mind that it is not conscious of an argument. And this it is, we believe, which has given a certain innate or a prior character to some of the notions and feelings of Natural Theism. They may be soundly bottomed notwithstanding—so that though mingled with the fears or the fancies of superstition, we can discern the substantial workings of Truth and Reason on the subject of a God, even in countries of grossest Heathenism. For the felt supremacy of Conscience established even there, a certain natural regimen of Morality—and gave the impression of a Jurisprudence wherewith the idea of an avenger and judge stood irresistibly associated. The Law written on the Heart suggested a Lawgiver however indistinct their personification of him may have been. Even the barbarous Theology of Greece and Rome, impure and licentious as it was, did not wholly obliterate what may be called the Theology of Natural Conscience.

15. And we mistake, if we think it was ever otherwise, even in the ages of darkest and most licentious Paganism. This Theology of Conscience has often been greatly obscured, but never, in any country or at any period in the history of the world, has it been wholly obliterated. We behold the vestiges of it

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in the simple Theology of the desert; and, perhaps, more distinctly there, than in the complex superstitions of an artificial and civilized heathenism. In confirmation of this, we might quote the invocations to the Great Spirit from the wilds of North America. But, indeed, in every quarter of the globe, where missionaries have held converse with savages, even with the rudest of Nature's children —when speaking on the topics of sin and judgment, they did not speak to them in vocables unknown. And as this sense of a universal Law and a Supreme Lawgiver never waned into total extinction among the tribes of ferocious and untamed wanderers—so neither was it altogether stifled by the refined and intricate polytheism of more enlightened nations. The whole of classic authorship teems with allusions to a Supreme Governor and Judge: And when the guilty Emperors of Rome were tempest-driven by remorse and fear, it was not that they trembled before a spectre of their own imagination. When terror mixed, which it often did, with the rage and cruelty of Nero, it was the theology of conscience which haunted him. It was not the suggestion of a capricious fancy which gave him the disturbance —but a voice issuing from the deep recesses of a moral nature, as stable and uniform throughout the species as is the material structure of humanity; and in the lineaments of which we may read that there is a moral regimen among men, and therefore a moral Governor who hath instituted, and who presides over it. Therefore, it was that these imperial despots, the worst and haughtiest of recorded monarchs, stood aghast at the spectacle

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of their own worthlessness. It is true, there is a wretchedness which naturally and essentially belongs to a state of great moral unhingement; and this may account for their discomforts, but it will not account for their fears. They may, because of this, have felt the torments of a present misery. But whence their fears of a coming vengeance? They would not have trembled at Nature's law, apart from the thought of Nature's Lawgiver. The imagination of an unsanctioned law would no more have given disquietude, than the imagination of a vacant throne. But the law, to their guilty apprehensions, bespoke a judge. The throne of heaven, to their troubled eye, was filled by a living monarch. Righteousness, it was felt, would not have been so enthroned in the moral system of man, had it not been previously enthroned in the system of the universe; nor would it have held such place and pre-eminence in the judgment of all spirits, had not the Father of Spirits been its friend and ultimate avenger. This is not a local or geographical notion. It is a universal feeling—to be found wherever men are found, because interwoven with the constitution of humanity. It is not, therefore, the peculiarity of one creed, or of one country. It circulates at large throughout the family of man. We can trace it in the Theology of savage life; nor is it wholly overborne by the artificial Theology of a more complex and idolatrous Paganism. Neither crime nor civilization can extinguish it; and whether in the "conscientia scelerum" of the fierce and frenzied Catiline, or in the tranquil contemplative musings of Socrates and

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Cicero, we find the impression of at once a righteous and a reigning Sovereign.

16. With this felt Supremacy of Conscience, we cannot rid ourselves of the impression that whatever the actual power or prevalence of vice may be in the world, it is but the tumult and insurrection of lower against higher elements—and that moral rectitude still undislodged from its empire in the pure region of Sentiment and Thought, sits aloft as it were in empyreal dignity; and from an eminence whence no Power in Earth or Heaven can dethrone her, commands the homage of all that is best and worthiest in Nature. When there is war betwixt Opinion and Force, the latter may have the physical ascendancy, yet the former is ever counted the nobler antagonist—and thus it is, that although vice should have enlisted under its standard of rebellion all the families of mankind, there remains the moral greatness of Virtue, as erect in the consciousness of its strength as if it had the public mind of the Universe upon its side. It is difficult to resist the feeling, that amid all the mystery of present appearances, the highest power is at one with the highest principle. And it confirms still more our idea of a government—that conscience not only gives forth her mandates with the tone and authority of a Superior; but, as if on purpose to enforce their observance, thus follows them up with an obvious discipline of rewards and punishments. It is enough but to mention, on the one hand, that felt complacency which is distilled, like some precious elixir, upon the heart by the recollection of virtuous deeds and virtuous sacrifices;

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and, on the other hand, those inflictions of remorse, which are attendant upon wickedness, and wherewith, as if by the whip of a secret tormentor, the heart of every conscious sinner is agonized. We discern in these the natural sanctions of morality, and the moral character of Him who hath ordained them. We cannot otherwise explain the peace and triumphant satisfaction which spring from the consciousness of well doing—nor can we otherwise explain the degradation as well as bitter distress, which a sense of demerit brings along with it. Our only adequate interpretation of these phenomena is, that they are the present remunerations or the present chastisements of a God who loveth righteousness, and who hateth iniquity. Nor do we view them as the conclusive results of virtue and vice, but rather as the tokens and the precursors either of a brighter reward or of a heavier vengeance, that are coming. It is thus that the delight of self-approbation, instead of standing alone, brings hope in its train; and remorse, instead of standing alone, brings terror in its train. The expectations of the future are blended with these joys and sufferings of the present; and all serve still more to stamp an impression, of which traces are to be found in every quarter of the earth—that we live under a retributive economy, and that the God who reigns over it takes a moral and judicial cognizance of the creatures whom He hath formed.

17. What then are the specific injunctions of conscience? for on this question essentially depends every argument that we can derive from this power or property of our nature, for the moral character

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of God. If, on the one hand, the lessons given forth by a faculty, which so manifestly claims to be the pre-eminent and ruling faculty of our nature, be those of deceit and licentiousness and cruelty—then, from the character of such a law, should we infer the character of the lawgiver; and so feel the conclusion to be inevitable, that we are under the government of a malignant and unrighteous God, at once the patron of vice and the persecutor of virtue in the world. If on the other hand, temperance, and chastity, and kindness, and integrity, and truth, be the mandates which generally, if not invariably proceed from her—then, on the same principles of judgment, should we reckon that He who is the author of conscience, and who gave it the place of supremacy and honour, which it so obviously possesess in the moral system of man, was himself the friend and the exemplar of all those virtues which enter into the composition of perfect moral rectitude. In the laws and the lessons of human conscience, would we study the character of the Godhead, just as we should study the views and dispositions of a monarch, in the instructions given by him to the viceroy of one of his provinces. If, on the one hand, virtue be prescribed by the authority of conscience, and followed up by her approval, in which very approval there is felt an inward satisfaction and serenity of spirit, that of itself forms a most delicious reward; and if, on the other hand, the perpetrations of wickedness are followed up by the voice of her rebuke, in which, identical with remorse, there is a sting of agony and discomfort, amounting to the

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severest penalty—then, are we as naturally disposed to infer of Him who ordained such a mental constitution that He is the righteous Governor of men, as, if seated on a visible throne in the midst of us, He had made the audible proclamation of His law, and by His own immediate hand, had distributed of His gifts to the obedient, and inflicted chastisements on the rebellious. The law of conscience may be regarded as comprising all those virtues which the hand of the Deity hath inscribed on the tablet of the human heart, or on the tablet of natural jurisprudence; and an argument for these being the very virtues which characterize and adorn Himself, is that they must have been transcribed from the prior tablet of His own nature.

18. We are sensible that there is much to obscure this inference in the actual circumstances of the world. More especially—it has been alleged, on the side of scepticism, that there is an exceeding diversity of moral judgments among men; that, out of the multifarious decisions of the human conscience, no consistent code of virtue can be framed; and that, therefore, no consistent character can be ascribed to Him, who planted this faculty in the bosom of our species, and bade it speak so uncertainly and so variously.* But to this it may

* On the uniformity of our moral judgments, we would refer to the 74th and 75th of Dr. Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. "If we bear in mind," says Sir James Macintosh, "that the question relates to the coincidence of all men in considering the same qualities as virtues, and not to the preference of one class of virtues by some, and of a different class by others, the exceptions from the agreement of mankind, in their systems of practical morality, will be reduced to absolute

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be answered, in the first place, that the apparent diversity is partly reducible into the blinding, or, at least, the distorting effect of passion and interest, which sometimes are powerful enough to obscure our perception, even of mathematical and historical truths, as well as of moral distinctions; and without therefore affecting the stability of either. It is thus, for example, that mercantile cupidity has blinded many a reckless adventurer to the enormous injustice of the slave-trade; that passion and interest together have transmuted revenge into a virtue; and that the robbery, which, if prosecuted only for the sake of individual gain, would have appeared to all under an aspect of most revolting selfishness, puts on the guise of patriotism, when a whole nation deliberates on the schemes, or is led by a career of daring and lofty heroism, to the spoliations of conquest. In all such cases, it is of capital importance to distinguish between the real character of any criminal action, when looked to calmly, comprehensively, and fully; and what that is in the action which the perpetrator singles out and fastens upon as his plea, when he is either defending it to others, or reconciling it to his own conscience. In as far as he knows the deed to be incapable of vindication, and yet rushes on the performance of it, there is but delinquency of conduct incurred, not a diversity of moral judgment; nor does Conscience, in this case, at all betray any

insignificance; and we shall learn to view them as no more affecting the harmony of the moral faculties, than the resemblance of the limbs and features is affected by monstrous conformations, or by the unfortunate effects of accident and disease in a very few individuals."

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caprice or uncertainty in her decisions. It is but the conduct, and not the conscience, which is in fault; and to determine whether the latter is in aught chargeable with fluctuation, we must look not to man's performance, but to his plea. Two men may differ as to the moral character of an action; but if each is resting the support of his own view on a different principle from the other, there may still be a perfect uniformity of moral sentiment between them. They own the authority of the same laws; they only disagree in the application of them. In the first place, the most vehement denouncer of a guilty commerce is at one with the most strenuous of its advocates, on the duty which each man owes to his family; and again, neither of them would venture to maintain the lawfulness of the trade, because of the miseries inflicted by it on those wretched sufferers who were its victims. The defender of this ruthless and rapacious system disowns not, in sentiment at least, however much he may disown in practice, the obligations of justice and humanity—nay, in all the palliations which he attempts of the enormity in question, he speaks of these as undoubted virtues, and renders the homage of his moral acknowledgments to them all. In the sophistry of his vindication, the principles of the ethical system are left untouched and entire. He meddles not with the virtuousness either of humanity or justice; but he tells of the humanity of slavery, and the justice of slavery. It is true, that he heeds not the representations which are given of the atrocities of his trade—that he does not attend because

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he wills not to attend; and in this there is practical unfairness. Still it but resolves itself into perversity of conduct, and not into perversity of sentiment. The very dread and dislike he has for the informations of the subject, are symptoms of a feeling that his conscience cannot be trusted with the question; or, in other words, prove him to be possessed of a conscience which is just like that of other men. The partialities of interest and feeling may give rise to an infinite diversity of moral judgments in our estimate of actions; while there may be the most perfect uniformity and stability of judgment in our estimate of principles: and, on all the great generalities of the ethical code, Conscience may speak the same language, and own one and the same moral directory all the world over.

19. When consciences then pronounce differently of the same action, it is for the most part, or rather, it is almost always, because understandings view it differently. It is either because the controversialists are regarding it with unequal degrees of knowledge; or, each, through the medium of his own partialities. The consciences of all would come forth with the same moral decision, were all equally enlightened in the circumstances, or in the essential relations and consequences of the deed in question; and, what is just as essential to this uniformity of judgment, were all viewing it fairly as well as fully. It matters not, whether it be ignorantly or wilfully, that each is looking to this deed, but in the one aspect, or in the one relation that is favourable to his own peculiar sentiment. In either case, the diversity of judgment on the moral qualities of the

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same action, is just as little to be wondered at as a similar diversity on the material qualities of the same object—should any of the spectators labour under an involuntary defect of vision, or voluntarily persist either in shutting or in averting his eyes. It is thus that a quarrel has well been termed a misunderstanding, in which each of the combatants may consider, and often honestly consider, himself to be in the right; and that, on reading the hostile memorials of two parties in a litigation, we can perceive no difference in their moral principles, but only in their historical statements; and that, in the public manifestoes of nations when entering upon war, we can discover no trace of a contrariety of conflict in their ethical systems, but only in their differently put or differently coloured representations of fact—all proving, that, with the utmost diversity of judgment among men respecting the moral qualities of the same thing, there may be a perfect identity of structure in their moral organs notwithstanding; and that Conscience, true to her office, needs but to be rightly informed, that she may speak the same language, and give forth the same lessons in all the countries of the earth.

20. It is this which explains the moral peculiarities of different nations. It is not that justice, humanity, and gratitude are not the canonized virtues of every region; or that falsehood, cruelty, and fraud would not, in their abstract and unassociated nakedness, be viewed as the objects of moral antipathy and rebuke. It is, that, in one and the same material action, when looked to in all the lights of which, whether in reality or by the power

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of imagination, it is susceptible, various, nay, opposite moral characteristics may be blended; and that while one people look to the good only without the evil, another may look to the evil only without the good. And thus the identical acts which, in one nation are the subjects of a most reverent and religious observance, may, in another be regarded with a shuddering sense of abomination and horror. And this, not because of any difference in what may be termed the moral categories of the two people, nor because, if moral principles in their unmixed generality were offered to the contemplation of either, either would call evil good or good evil. When theft was publicly honoured and rewarded in Sparta, it was not because theft in itself was reckoned a good thing; but because patriotism, and dexterity, and those services by which the interests of patriotism might be supported, were reckoned to be good things. When the natives of Hindostan assemble with delight around the agonies of a human sacrifice, it is not because they hold it good to rejoice in a spectacle of pain; but because they hold it good to rejoice in a spectacle of heroic devotion to the memory of the dead. When parents are exposed or children are destroyed, it is not because it is deemed to be right that there should be the infliction of misery for its own sake; but because it is deemed to be right that the wretchedness of old age should be curtailed, or that the world should be saved from the miseries of an over-crowded species. In a word, in the very worst of these anomalies, some form of good may be detected, which has led to their establishment;

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and still some universal and undoubted principle of morality, however perverted or misapplied, can be alleged in vindication of them. A people may be deluded by their ignorance; or misguided by their superstition; or, not only hurried into wrong deeds, but even fostered into wrong sentiments, under the influences of that cupidity or revenge, which are so perpetually operating in the warfare of savage or demisavage nations. Yet, in spite of all the topical moralities to which these have given birth, there is an unquestioned and universal morality notwithstanding. And in every case, where the moral sense is unfettered by these associations; and the judgment is uncramped, either by the partialities of interest or by the inveteracy of national customs which habit and antiquity have rendered sacred—Conscience is found to speak the same language; nor, to the remotest ends of the world, is there a country or an island, where the same uniform and consistent voice is not heard from her. Let the mists of ignorance and passion and artificial education be only cleared away; and the moral attributes of goodness and righteousness and truth be seen undistorted, and in their own proper guise; and there is not a heart or a conscience throughout earth's teeming population, which could refuse to do them homage. And it is precisely because the Father of the human family has given such hearts and consciences to all his children, that we infer these to be the very sanctities of the Godhead, the very attributes of his own primeval nature.

21. There is a countless diversity of tastes in

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the world, because of the infinitely various circumstances and associations of men. Yet is there a stable and correct standard of taste notwithstanding, to which all minds, that have the benefit of culture and enlargement, are gradually assimilating and approximating. It holds far more emphatically true, that, in spite of the diversity of moral judgments, which are vastly less wide and numerous than the former, there is a fixed standard of morals, rallying around itself all consciences, to the greater principles of which, a full and unanimous homage is rendered from every quarter of the globe; and even to the lesser principles and modifications of which, there is a growing and gathering consent, with every onward step in the progress of light and civilization. In proportion as the understandings of men become more enlightened, do their consciences become more accordant with each other. Even now there is not a single people on the face of the earth, among whom barbarity and licentiousness and fraud are deified as virtues—where it does not require the utmost strength, whether of superstition or of patriotism in its most selfish and contracted form, to uphold the delusion. Apart from these local and, we venture to hope, these temporary exceptions, the same moralities are recognised and honoured; and, however prevalent in practice, in sentiment at least, the same vices are disowned and execrated all the world over. In proportion as superstition is dissipated, and prejudice is gradually weakened by the larger intercourse of nations, these moral peculiarities do evidently wear away; till at length, if we may judge from the

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obvious tendency of things, conscience will, in the full manhood of our species, assert the universality and the unchangeableness of her decisions. There is no speech nor language where her voice is not heard; her line is gone out through all the earth; and her words to the ends of the world.

22. On the whole, then, conscience, whether it be an original or a derived faculty, yet as founded on human nature, if not forming a constituent part of it, may be regarded as a faithful witness for God the author of that nature, and as rendering to his character a consistent testimony. It is not necessary, for the establishment of our particular lesson, that we should turn that which is clear into that which is controversial by our entering into the scientific question respecting the physical origin of conscience, or tracing the imagined pedigree of its descent from simpler or anterior principles in the constitution of man. For, as has been well remarked by Sir James Macintosh—"If Conscience be inherent, that circumstance is, according to the common mode of thinking, a sufficient proof of its title to veneration. But if provision be made, in the constitution and circumstances of all men for uniformity, producing it by processes similar to those which produce other acquired sentiments, may not our reverence be augmented by admiration of that supreme wisdom, which, in such mental contrivances, yet more highly than in the lower world of matter, accomplish mighty purposes by instruments so simple?" It is not therefore the physical origin, but the fact, of the uniformity of Conscience, wherewith is concerned the theological

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inference that we attempt to draw from it. This ascendant faculty of our nature, which has been so often termed the divinity within us, notwithstanding the occasional sophistry of the passions, is on the whole, representative of the Divinity above us; and the righteousness and goodness and truth the lessons of which it gives forth every where, may well be regarded, both as the laws which enter into the juridical constitution, and as the attributes which enter into the moral character of God.

23. We admit a considerable diversity of moral observation in the various countries of the earth, but without admitting any correspondent diversity of moral sentiment between them. When human sacrifices are enforced and applauded in one nation—this is not because of their cruelty, but notwithstanding of their cruelty. Even there, the universal principle of humanity would be acknowledged, that it were wrong to inflict a wanton and uncalled for agony on any of our fellows—but there is a local superstition which counteracts the universal principle, and overbears it. When in the republic of Sparta, theft, instead of being execrated as a crime, was dignified into an art and an accomplishment, and on that footing admitted into the system of their youthful education—it was not because of its infringement on the rights of property, but notwithstanding of that infringement, and only because a local patriotism made head against the universal principle, and prevailed over it. Apart from such disturbing forces as these, it will be found that the sentiments of men gravitate towards one and the same standard

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all over the globe; and that, when once the obscurations of superstition and selfishness are dissipated, there will be found the same moral light in every mind, a recognition of the same moral law, as the immutable and eternal code of righteousness for all countries and all ages. We have already quoted the noble testimony of a heathen, who tells us with equal eloquence and truth, that, even amid all the perversities of a vitiated and endlessly diversified creed, Conscience sat mistress over the whole earth, and asserted the supremacy of her own unalterable obligations.*

24. Such then is our first argument for the moral character of God, and which, as a character implies an existence, might be resolved into an argument for the being of God—even the moral character of the law of conscience; that conscience which He hath inserted among the faculties of our nature; and armed with the felt authority of a master; and furnished with sanctions for the enforcement of its dictates; and so framed, that, apart from local perversities of the understanding or the habits, all its decisions are on the side of righteousness. The inference is neither a distant nor an obscure one, from the character of such a law to the character of its lawgiver. Neither is it an inference, destroyed by the insurrection which has taken place on the part of our lower faculties, or by the actual prevalence of vice in the world. For this has only enabled Conscience to come forth with another and additional demonstration of

* Book I. c. 1. § 33.

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its sovereignty—just as the punishment of crime in society bears evidence to the justice of the government which is established there. In general, the inward complacency felt by the virtuous, does not so impressively bespeak the real purpose and character of this the ruling faculty in man, as do the remorse, and the terror, and the bitter dissatisfaction, wherewith the hearts of the wicked are exercised. It is true, that, by every act of iniquity, outrage is done to the law of conscience; but there is a felt reaction within which tells that the outrage is resented; and then it is, that Conscience makes most emphatic assertion of its high prerogative, when, instead of coming forth as the benign and generous dispenser of its rewards to the obedient, it comes forth like an offended monarch in the character of an avenger. Were we endowed with prophetic vision, so as to behold, among the yet undisclosed secrets of futurity, the spectacle of a judge, and a judgment-seat, and an assembled world, and the retributions of pleasure and pain to the good and to the evil; this were fetching from afar an argument for the righteousness of God. But the instant pleasure and the instant pain wherewith conscience follows up the doings of man, brings this very argument within the limits of actual observation. Only, instead of being manifested by the light of a preternatural revelation, it is suggested to us by one of the most familiar certainties of experience, for in these phenomena and feelings of our own moral nature, do we behold not only a present judgment, but a present execution of the sentence.

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25. Some perhaps may imagine the same sort of transition in this reasoning from the abstract to the concrete, that there is in the *a priori* argument. The abettors of this argument talk of our notion of any part of space as an inch, being but itself a part of our entire and original notion of immensity; and in like manner, that our notion of any part of time as an hour, is but part of the entire and original notion of eternity that is in every mind. They regard our ideas of infinite space and infinite time as belonging to the simplest elements of Thought; and that therefore the certainty of the things which they represent, carries in it all the light and authority of a first principle. And then upon the maxim that every attribute or quality implies a substantive Being in which it resides, they step from the abstract to the concrete, from the infinite extent and the infinite duration to an infinitely extended and an infinitely enduring God. We confess, though it should be called a similar transition from the abstract to the concrete, that we feel vastly greater confidence in passing by inference from a Law to a Lawgiver. The supremacy of Conscience is a fact in the constitution of human nature—seen in the light of consciousness by each man, of his own individual specimen; and verified in the light of observation, as extending to every other specimen within the compass of his knowledge. And however quick the inference may be from the supremacy of Conscience within the breast, to the Supreme Power who established it there being himself a righteous Sovereign—yet this is strictly an argument *a posteriori* both for

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the Being and the Character of God. It is the strongest, we apprehend, which Nature furnishes for the Moral Perfections of the Deity; and even with all minds, or certainly with most minds, the most effective argument for His Existence—though ushered into the creed of Nature not by a train of inferences, but by the light of an almost immediate perception. It is thus that in our first addresses to any human Being on the subject of religion, we may safely presume a God without entering on the proof of a God. He has already the lesson within himself—and it is a lesson which tells him more, or at least speaks to him with greater force than the whole of external Nature. Instead of bidding him look to its collocations, he will be more powerfully impressed and occupied with the idea of a God, if he but hearken to the voice of his own Conscience. It gave direct suggestion of a ruling and a righteous God, even in the days of corrupted Paganism.—And still with the unlettered of our present day and apart from the light of Christianity, along with the popular demonology of inferior spirits, there is the paramount impression of a one moral Governor among men.

CHAPTER III.

On the inherent Pleasure of the Virtuous, and Misery of the Vicious Affections.

1. We are often told by moralists, that there is a native and essential happiness in moral worth; and

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a like native and essential wretchedness in moral depravity—insomuch that the one may be regarded as its own reward, and the other as its own punishment. We do not always recollect that this happiness on the one hand, and this misery on the other, are each of them made up, severally of distinct ingredients; and that thus, by mental analysis, we might strengthen our argument both for the being and the character of God. When we discover, that, into this alleged happiness of the good there enter more enjoyments than one, we thereby obtain two or more testimonies of the Divine regard for virtue; and the proof is enhanced in the same peculiar way, that the evidence of design is, in any other department of creation, when we perceive the concurrence of so many separate and independent elements, which meet together for the production of some complex and beneficial result.

2. We have already spoken of one such ingredient. There is a felt satisfaction in the thought of having done what we know to be right; and, in counterpart to this complacency of self-approbation, there is a felt discomfort, amounting often to bitter and remorseful agony, in the thought of having done what conscience tells us to be wrong. This implies a sense of the rectitude of what is virtuous. But without thinking of its rectitude at all, without viewing it in reference either to the law of conscience or to the law of God, with no regard to jurisprudence in the matter—there is, in the virtuous affection itself, another and a distinct enjoyment. We ought to cherish and to exercise benevolence; and there is a pleasure in the consciousness of doing

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what we ought: but beside this moral sentiment, and beside the peculiar pleasure appended to benevolence as moral, there is a sensation in the merely physical affection of benevolence; and that sensation, of itself, is in the highest degree pleasurable. The primary or instant gratification which there is in the direct and immediate feeling of benevolence is one thing: the secondary or reflex gratification which there is in the consciousness of benevolence as moral is another thing. The two are distinct of themselves; but the contingent union of them, in the case of every virtuous affection, gives a multiple force to the conclusion, that God is the lover, and, because so, the patron or the rewarder of virtue. He hath so constituted our nature, that, in the very flow and exercise of the good affections, there shall be the oil of gladness. There is instant delight in the first conception of benevolence. There is sustained delight in its continued exercise. There is consummated delight in the happy smiling and prosperous result of it. Kindness, and honesty, and truth, are, of themselves, and irrespective of their rightness, sweet unto the taste of the inner man. Malice, envy, falsehood, injustice, irrespective of their wrongness, have of themselves, the bitterness of gall and wormwood. The Deity hath annexed a high mental enjoyment, not to the consciousness only of good affections, but to the very sense and feeling of good affections. However closely these may follow on each other—nay, however implicated or blended together they may be at the same moment into one compound state of feeling; they are not the less distinct on that

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account, of themselves. They form two pleasureable sensations, instead of one; and their apposition, in the case of every virtuous deed or virtuous desire, exhibits to us that very concurrence in the world of mind, which obtains with such frequency and fulness in the world of matter—affording, in every new part that is added, not a simply repeated only, but a vastly multiplied evidence for design, throughout all its combinations. There is a pleasure in the very sensation of virtue; and there is a pleasure attendant on the sense of its rectitude. These two phenomena are independent of each other. Let there be a certain number of chances against the first in a random economy of things, and also a certain number of chances against the second. In the actual economy of things, where there is the conjunction of both phenomena—it is the product of these two numbers which represents the amount of evidence afforded by them, for a moral government in the world, and a moral Governor over them.

3. In the calm satisfactions of virtue, this distinction may not be so palpable, as in the pungent and more vividly felt disquietudes which are attendant on the wrong affections of our nature. The perpetual corrosion of that heart, for example, which frets in unhappy peevishness all the day long, is plainly distinct from the bitterness of that remorse which is felt, in the recollection of its harsh and injurious outbreakings on the innocent sufferers within its reach. It is saying much for the moral character of God, that he has placed a conscience within us, which administers painful

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rebuke on every indulgence of a wrong affection. But it is saying still more for such being the character of our Maker—so to have framed our mental constitution, that, in the very working of these bad affections there should be the painfulness of a felt discomfort and discordancy. Such is the make or mechanism of our nature, that it is thwarted and put out of sorts, by rage and envy, and hatred; and this, irrespective of the adverse moral judgments which conscience passes upon them. Of themselves, they are unsavoury; and no sooner do they enter the heart, than they shed upon it an immediate distillation of bitterness. Just as the plaicd smile of benevolence bespeaks the felt comfort of benevolence; so, in the frown and tempest of an angry countenance, do we read the unhappiness of that man who is vexed and agitated by his own malignant affections—eating inwardly as they do on the vitals of his enjoyment. It is, therefore, that he is often styled, and truly, a self-tormentor; or, his own worst enemy. The delight of virtue in itself, is a separate thing from the delight of the conscience which approves it. And the pain of moral evil in itself, is a separate thing from the pain inflicted by conscience in the act of condemning it. They offer to our notice two distinct ingredients, both of the present reward attendant upon virtue, and of the present penalty attendant upon vice; and so, enhance the evidence that is before our eyes, for the moral character of that administration, under which the world has been placed by its Author. The appetite of hunger is rightly alleged, in evidence of the care, wherewith

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the Deity hath provided for the well-being of our natural constitution; and the pleasurable taste of food is rightly alleged as an additional proof of the same. And so, if the urgent voice of conscience within, calling us to virtue, be alleged in evidence of the care, wherewith the Deity hath provided for the well-being of our moral constitution; the pleasurable taste of virtue in itself, with the bitterness of its opposite, may well be alleged as additional evidence thereof. They alike afford the present and the sensible tokens of a righteous administration, and so of a righteous God.

4. Our present argument is grounded, neither on the rectitude of virtue, nor on its utility in the grosser and more palpable sense of that term—but on the immediate sweetness of it. It is the office of conscience to tell us of its rectitude. It is by experience that we learn its utility. But the sweetness of it—the *dulce* of virtue, as distinguished from its *utile*, is a thing of instant sensation. It may be decomposed into two ingredients, with one of which conscience has to do—even the pleasure we have, when any deed or any affection of ours receives from her a favourable verdict. But it has another ingredient which forms the proper and the distinct argument that we are now urging—even the pleasure we have in the mere relish of the affection itself. If it be a proof of benevolence in God, that our external organs of taste should have been so framed, as to have a liking for wholesome food; it is no less the proof both of a benevolent and a righteous God, so to have framed our mental economy, as that right and wholesome morality

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should be palatable to the taste of the inner man. Virtue is not only seen to be right—it is felt to be delicious. There is happiness in the very wish to make others happy. There is a heart's ease, or a heart's enjoyment, even in the first purposes of kindness, as well as in its subsequent performances. There is a certain rejoicing sense of clearness in the consistency, the exactitude of justice and truth. There is a triumphant elevation of spirit in magnanimity and honour. In perfect harmony with this, there is a placid feeling of serenity and blissful contentment in gentleness and humility. There is a noble satisfaction in those victories, which, at the bidding of principle, or by the power of self-command, may have been achieved over the propensities of animal nature. There is an elate independence of soul, in the consciousness of having nothing to hide, and nothing to be ashamed of. In a word, by the constitution of our nature, each virtue has its appropriate charm; and virtue, on the whole, is a fund of varied, as well as of perpetual enjoyment, to him who hath imbibed its spirit, and is under the guidance of its principles. He feels all to be health and harmony within; and without, he seems as if to breathe in an atmosphere of beauteous transparency—proving how much the nature of man and the nature of virtue are in unison with each other. It is hunger which urges to the use of food; but it strikingly demonstrates the care and benevolence of God, so to have framed the organ of taste, as that there shall be a superadded enjoyment in the use of it. It is conscience which urges to the practice of virtue; but it serves to

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enhance the proof of a moral purpose, and therefore of a moral character in God, so to have framed our mental economy, that, in addition to the felt obligation of its rightness, virtue should of itself, be so regaling to the taste of the inner man.

5. In counterpart to these sweets and satisfactions of virtue, is the essential and inherent bitterness of all that is morally evil. We repeat, that, with this particular argument, we do not mix up the agonies of remorse. It is the wretchedness of vice in itself, not the wretchedness which we suffer because of its recollected and felt wrongness that we now speak of. It is not the painfulness of the compunction felt because of our anger, upon which we at this moment insist; but the painfulness of the emotion itself; and the same remark applies to all the malignant desires of the human heart. True, it is inseparable from the very nature of a desire, that there must be some enjoyment or other, at the time of its gratification; but, in the case of these evil affections, it is not unmixed enjoyment. The most ordinary observer of his own feelings, however incapable of analysis, must be sensible, even at the moment of wreaking, in full indulgence of his resentment, on the man who has provoked or injured him, that all is not perfect and entire enjoyment within; but that, in this, and indeed in every other malignant feeling, there is a sore burden of disquietude—an unhappiness tumultuating in the heart, and visibly pictured on the countenance. The ferocious tyrant who has only to issue forth his mandate, and strike

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dead at pleasure the victim of his wrath, with any circumstance too of barbaric caprice and cruelty, which his fancy in the very waywardness of passion unrestrained and power unbounded might suggest to him—he may be said to have experienced through life a thousand gratifications, in the solaced rage and revenge, which, though ever breaking forth on some new subject, he can appease again every day of his life by some new execution. But we mistake it if we think otherwise than that, in spite of these distinct and very numerous nay daily gratifications if he so choose, it is not a life of fierce internal agony notwithstanding. It seems indispensable to the nature of every desire, and to form part indeed of its very idea, that there should be a distinctly felt pleasure, or at least, a removal at the time of a distinctly felt pain, in the act of its fulfilment—yet, whatever recreation or relief may have thus been rendered, without doing away the misery, often in the whole amount of it the intense misery, inflicted upon man by the evil propensities of his nature. Who can doubt for example the unhappiness of the habitual drunkard?—and that, although the ravenous appetite, by which he is driven along a stormy career, meets every day, almost every hour of the day, with the gratification that is suited to it. The same may be equally affirmed of the voluptuary, or of the depredator, or of the extortioner, or of the liar. Each may succeed in the attainment of his specific object; and we cannot possibly disjoin from the conception of success, the conception of some sort of pleasure —yet in perfect consistency, we affirm, with a sad

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and heavy burthen of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the whole. He is little conversant with our nature who does not know of many a passion belonging to it, that it may be the instrument of many pleasurable, nay delicious or exquisite sensations, and yet be a wretched passion still; the domineering tyrant of a bondsman, who at once knows himself to be degraded, and feels himself to be unhappy. A sense of guilt is one main ingredient of this misery—yet physically, and notwithstanding the pleasure or the relief inseparable at the moment from every indulgence of the passions, there are other sensations of bitterness, which of themselves, and apart from remorse, would cause the suffering to preponderate.

6. There is an important discrimination made by Bishop Butler in his sermons; and, by the help of which, this phenomenon, of apparent contradiction or mystery in our nature, may be satisfactorily explained. He distinguishes between the final object of any of our desires, and the pleasure attendant on or rather inseparable from its gratification. The object is not the pleasure, though the pleasure be an unfailing and essential accompaniment on the attainment of the object. This is well illustrated by the appetite of hunger, of which it were more proper to say that it seeks for food, than that it seeks for the pleasure which there is in eating the food. The food is the object; the pleasure is the accompaniment. We do not here speak of the distinct and secondary pleasure which there is in the taste of food, but of that other pleasure which strictly and properly

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attaches to the gratification of the appetite of hunger. This is the pleasure, or relief, which accompanies the act of eating; while the ultimate object, the object in which the appetite rests and terminates, is the food itself. The same is true of all our special affections. Each has a proper and peculiar object of its own, and the mere pleasure attendant on the prosecution or the indulgence of the affection is not, as has been clearly established by Butler and fully reasserted by Dr. Thomas Brown, is not that object. The two are as distinct from each other, as a thing loved is distinct from the pleasure of loving it. Every special inclination has its special and counterpart object. The object of the inclination is one thing; the pleasure of gratifying the inclination is another; and, in most instances, it were more proper to say, that it is for the sake of the object than for the sake of the pleasure that the inclination is gratified. The distinction that we now urge though felt to be a subtle, is truly a substantial one; and pregnant, both with important principle and important application. The discovery and clear statement of it by Butler may well be regarded as the highest service rendered by any philosopher to moral science; and that, from the light which it casts, both on the processes of the human constitution and on the theory of virtue. As one example of the latter service, the principle in question, so plainly and convincingly unfolded by this great Christian philosopher in his sermon on the love of our neighbour, strikes, and with most conclusive effect, at the root of the selfish system of morals; a system which

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professes that man's sole object, in the practice of all the various moralities, is his own individual advantage.* Now, in most cases of a special, and more particularly of a virtuous affection, it can be demonstrated, that the object is a something out of himself and distinct from himself. Take compassion for one instance out of the many. The object of this affection is the relief of another's misery, and, in the fulfilment of this, does the affection meet with its full solace and gratification; that is, in a something altogether external from himself. It is true, that there is an appropriate pleasure in the indulgence of this affection, even as there is in the indulgence of every other; and in proportion, too, to the strength of the affection, will be the greatness of the pleasure. The man who is doubly more compassionate than his fellow, will have doubly a greater enjoyment in the relief of misery; yet that, most assuredly, not because he of the two is the more intently set on his own gratification, but because he of the two is the more intently set on an outward accomplishment, the relief of another's wretchedness. The truth is, that, just because more compassionate than his fellow, the more intent is he than the other on the object of this affection, and the less intent is he than the other on himself the subject of this affection. His thoughts and feelings are more drawn away *to* the sufferer, and therefore more drawn away *from* himself. He is

* How is it that the utilitarians of our day make so little account of Butler, whom nevertheless some of them profess to idolize? The truth is, that the distinction which he has established between the object of an affection and its accompanying pleasure, strikes at the foundation of their system?

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the most occupied with the object of this affection; and, on that very account, the least occupied with the pleasure of its indulgence. And it is precisely the objective quality of these regards, which stamps upon compassion the character of a disinterested affection. He surely is the most compassionate whose thoughts and feelings are most drawn away to the sufferer, and most drawn away from self; or, in other words, most taken up with the direct consideration of him who is the object of this affection, and least taken up with the reflex consideration of the pleasure that he himself has in the indulgence of it. Yet this prevents not the pleasure from being actually felt; and felt, too, in very proportion to the intensity of the compassion; or, in other words, more felt the less it has been thought of at the time, or the less it has been pursued for its own sake. It seems unavoidable in every affection, that, the more a thing is loved, the greater must be the pleasure of indulging the love of it: yet it is equally unavoidable, that the greater in that case will be our aim towards the object of the affection, and the less will be our aim towards the pleasure which accompanies its gratification. And thus, to one who reflects profoundly and carefully on these things, it is no paradox that he who has had doubly greater enjoyment than another in the exercise of compassion, is doubly the more disinterested of the two; that he has had the most pleasure in this affection who has been the least careful to please himself with the indulgence of it; that he whose virtuous desires, as being the strongest, have in their gratification

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ministered to self the greatest satisfaction, has been the least actuated of all his fellows by the wishes, and stood at the greatest distance from the aims of selfishness.*

7. And moreover, there is a just and philosophical sense, in which many of our special affections, besides the virtuous, are alike disinterested with these; even though they have been commonly ranked among the selfish affections of our nature. The proper object of self-love is the good of self; and this calm general regard to our own happiness may be considered, in fact, as the only interested affection to which our nature is competent. The special affections are, one and all of them, distinct from self-love, both in their objects, and in the real psychological character of the affections themselves. The object of the avaricious affection is the acquirement of wealth; of the resentful, the chastisement of an offender; of the sensual, something appropriate or suited to that corporeal affection which forms the reigning appetite at the time. In many of these, is the good of self the proper discriminative object of the affection; and the mind of him who is under their power, and engaged in their prosecution, is differently employed from the mind of him, who, at the time, is either devising or doing aught for the general or abstract end of his own happiness. None of these special affections is identical with the affection which has happiness for its object. So far from this, the avaricious man often, conscious of the strength of his propensity,

* The purely disinterested character of a right religious affection might be proved by these considerations.

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and at the moment of being urged forward by it to new speculations, acknowledges in his heart, that he would be happier far, could he but moderate its violence, and be satisfied with an humbler fortune than that to which his aspirations would carry him. And the resentful man, in the very act of being tempest-driven to some furious onset against the person who has affronted or betrayed him, may yet be sensible that, instead of seeking for any benefit to himself, he is rushing on the destruction of his character, or fortune, or even life. And many is the drunkard who under the goadings of an appetite which he cannot withstand, in place of self-love being the principle, and his own greatest happiness the object, knows himself to be on the road to inevitable ruin. There is an affection which has happiness for its object; but this is not the affection which rules and has the ascendancy in any of these instances. These are all special affections, grounded on the affinities which obtain between certain objects and certain parts of human nature; and which cannot be indulged beyond a given extent, without distemper and discomfort to the whole nature; so that, in spite of all the particular gratifications which follow in their train, the man over whom they tyrannise may be unhappy upon the whole. The very distinction between the affection of self-love and the special affections proves that there is a corresponding distinction in their objects; and this again, that many of the latter may be gratified, while the former is disappointed,—or, in other words, that, along with many particular enjoyments, the general state of

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man may be that of utter and extreme wretchedness. It is therefore a competent question, what those special affections are, which most consist with the general happiness of the mind; and this, notwithstanding that they all possess one circumstance in common—the unavoidable pleasure appendant to the gratification of each of them.*

8. This explanation will help us to understand wherein it is that the distinction in point of enjoyment, between a good and an evil affection of our nature, properly lies. For there is a certain species

* The following are the clear and judicious observations of Sir James Macintosh on this subject:—

"In contending, therefore, that the benevolent affections are disinterested, no more is claimed for them than must be granted to mere animal appetites and to malevolent passions. Each of these principles alike seeks its own object, for the sake simply of obtaining it. Pleasure is the result of the attainment, but no separate part of the aim of the agent. The desire that another person may be gratified, seeks that outward object alone, according to the general course of human desire. Resentment is as disinterested as gratitude or pity, but not more so. Hunger or thirst may be as much as the purest benevolence, at variance with self-love. A regard to our own general happiness is not a vice, but in itself an excellent quality. It were well if it prevailed more generally over craving and short-sighted appetites. The weakness of the social affections, and the strength of the private desires, properly constitute selfishness; a vice utterly at variance with the happiness of him who harbours it, and as such, condemned by self-love. There are as few who attain the greatest satisfaction to themselves, as who do the greatest good to others. It is absurd to say with some, that the pleasure of benevolence is selfish, because it is felt by self. Understanding and reasoning are acts of self, for no man can think by proxy; but no man ever called them *selfish*, why? Evidently because they do not *regard* self. Precisely the same reason applies to benevolence. Such an argument is a gross confusion of self, as it is a *subject* of feeling or thought, with self considered as the *object* of either. It is no more just to refer the private appetites to self-love because they commonly promote happiness, than it would be to refer them to self-hatred, in those frequent cases where their gratification obstructs it."

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of enjoyment common to them all. It were a contradiction in terms to affirm otherwise; for it were tantamount to saying, that an affection may be gratified, without the actual experience of a gratification. There must be some sensation or other of happiness, at the time when a man obtains that which he is seeking for; and if it be not a positive sensation of pleasure, it will at least be the sensation of a relief from pain, as when one meets with the opportunity of wreaking upon its object, that indignation which had long kept his heart in a tumult of disquietude. We therefore would mistake the matter, if we thought, that a state even of thorough and unqualified wickedness was exclusive of all enjoyment—for even the vicious affections must share in that enjoyment, which inseparably attaches to every affection, at the moment of its indulgence. And thus it is, that even in the veriest Pandemonium, might there be lurid gleams of ecstasy, and shouts of fiendish exultation—the merriment of desperadoes in crime, who send forth the outcries of their spiteful and savage delight, when some deep-laid villany has triumphed; or when in some dire perpetration of revenge, they have given full satisfaction and discharge to the malignity of their accursed nature. The assertion therefore may be taken too generally, when it is stated, that there is no enjoyment whatever in the veriest hell of assembled outcasts; for even there, might there be many separate and specific gratifications. And we must abstract the pleasure essentially involved in every affection, at the instant of its indulgence, and which cannot possibly be disjoined

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from it, ere we see clearly and distinctively wherein it is that, in respect of enjoyment, the virtuous and vicious affections differ from each other. For it is true, that there is a common resemblance between them; and that, by the universal law and nature of affection, there must be some sort of agreeable sensation, in the act of their obtaining that which they are seeking after. Yet it is no less true, that, did the former affections bear supreme rule in the heart, they would brighten and tranquillize the whole of human existence—whereas, had the latter the entire and practical ascendancy, they would distemper the whole man, and make him as completely wretched as he were completely worthless.

9. There is one leading difference then between a virtuous and a vicious affection—that there is always a felt sweetness in the very presence and contact of the former; whereas, in the presence and contact of the latter, there is generally or very often at least, a sensation of bitterness. Let them agree as they may in the undoubted fact of a gratification in the attainment of their respective ends, the affections themselves may be long in existence and operation before their ends are arrived at; and then it is, we affirm, that if compared, there will be found a wide distinction and dissimilarity between them. The very feeling of kindness is pleasant to the heart; and the very feeling of anger is a painful and corrosive one. The latter, we know, is often said to be a mixed feeling—because of both the pleasure and the pain which are said to enter into it. But it will be found that the pleasure, in this case, lies in the prospect of full and final gratifica-

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tion; and very often, in a sort of current or partial gratification which one may experience beforehand, in the mere vent or utterance by words, of the labouring violence that is within—seeing that words of bitterness, when discharged on the object of our wrath, are sometimes the only, and even the most effective executioners of all the vengeance that we meditate; besides that by their means, we may enlist in our favour the grateful sympathy of other men—thus obtaining a solace to ourselves, and aggravating the punishment of the offender, by exciting against him, in addition to our own hostility, the hostile indignation of his fellows. And thus too is it, that, in the case of anger, there may not only be a completed gratification at the last, by the infliction of a full and satisfactory chastisement; but a gratification, as it were by instalments, with every likely purpose of retaliation that we may form in our bosoms, and every sentence of keen and reproachful eloquence that may fall from our lips. And so anger has been affirmed to be a mixed emotion, from confounding the pleasure that lies in the gratification of the emotion, with the pleasure that is supposed to lie in the feeling of the emotion. But the truth is, that, apart from the gratification, the emotion is an exceedingly painful one—insomuch that the gratification mainly lies in the removal of a pain, or in the being ridded of a felt uneasiness. Compassion may in the same way be termed a mixed feeling. But on close attention to these two affections and comparison between them, it will be found, that all the pleasure of anger lies in its gratification, and all the pain of

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it in the feeling itself—whereas all the pain of compassion lies in the disappointment of its gratification, while in the feeling itself there is nought but pleasure. Let the respective gratifications of these two affections—the one, by the fulfilled retaliation of a wrong; the other, by the fulfilled relief of a suffering—let these gratifications be put out of notice altogether, that we might but attend to the yet ungratified feelings themselves: and we cannot imagine a greater difference of state between two minds, than that of one which luxuriates in the tenderness of compassion, and that of another which breathes and is infuriated with the dark passions and the still darker purposes of resentment. Or we may appeal to the experience of the same mind, which at one time may have its hour of meditated kindness, and at another its hour of meditated revenge. We speak of these two, not in the moment of their respective triumphs, not of the sensations attendant on the success of each—but of the direct and instant sensations which lie in the feelings themselves. They form two as distinct states in the moral world, as sunshine and tempest are in the physical world. We have but to name the elements which enter into the composition of each, in order to suggest the utter contrariety which obtains between them—between the calm and placid cheerfulness on the one hand of that heart which is employed in conceiving the generous wishes, or in framing the liberal and fruitful devices of benevolence; and, on the other hand, the turbulence and fierce disorder of the same heart, when burning disdain, or fell and

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implacable hatred has taken possession of it—the reaction of its own affronted pride, or aggrieved sense of the injury which has been done to it.

10. But perhaps the most favourable moment for comparison between them, is when each is frustrated of its peculiar aim; and so each is sent back upon itself, with that common suffering to which all the affections are liable—the suffering of a disappointment. We shall be at no loss to determine on which side the advantage lies, if we have either felt or witnessed benevolence in tears, because of the misery which it cannot alleviate; and rage, in the agonies of its defeated impotence, because of the haughty and successful defiance of an enemy, whom with vain hostility it has tried to assail, but cannot reach. We have the example of a good affection under disappointment, in the case of virtuous grief or virtuous indignation; and of a bad affection under disappointment, in the case of envy, when, in spite of every attempt to calumniate or depress its object, he shines forth to universal acknowledgment and applause, in all the lustre of his vindicated superiority. It marks how distinct these two sets of feelings are from each other, that, with the former, even under the pain of disappointment, there is a something in the very taste and quality of the feelings themselves, which acts as an emollient or a charm, and mitigates the painfulness—while, with the latter, there is nought to mitigate, but every thing to exasperate, and more fiercely to agonize. The malignant feelings are no sooner turned inwardly, by the arrest of a disappointment from without, than they

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eat inwardly; and, when foiled in the discharge of their purposed violence upon others, they recoil—and, without one soothing ingredient to calm the labouring effervescence, they kindle a hell in the heart of the unhappy owner. Internally there is a celestial peace and satisfaction in virtue, even though in the midst of its outward discomfiture, it be compelled to weep over the unredressed wrongs and sufferings of humanity. On the other hand, the very glance of disappointed malevolence, bespeaks of this evil affection, that, of itself, it is a fierce and fretting distemper of the soul, an executioner of vengeance for all the guilty passions it may have fanned into mischievous activity, and for all the crimes it may have instigated.

11. And this contrast between a good and an evil affection, this superiority of the former to the latter is fully sustained, when, instead of looking to the state of mind which is left by the disappointment of each, we look to the state of mind which is left by their respective gratifications—the one a state of sated compassion, the other of sated resentment. There is one most observable distinction between the states of feeling, by which an act of compassion on the one hand, and of resentment on the other, are succeeded. It is seldom that man feasts his eyes on that spectacle of prostrate suffering which, in a moment of fury, he hath laid at his feet; in the same way that he feasts his eyes on that picture of family comfort which smiles upon him from some cottage home, that his generosity had reared. This looks as if the sweets of benevolence were lasting, whereas the sweets of revengeful malice,

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such as they are, are in general but momentary. An act of compassion may extinguish for a time the feeling of compassion, by doing away that suffering which is the object of it; but then it generally is followed up by a feeling of permanent regard. An act of revenge, when executed to the full extent of the desire or purpose, does extinguish and put an end to the passion of revenge; and is seldom, if ever, followed up by a feeling of permanent hatred. An act of kindness but attaches the more, and augments a friendly disposition towards its object. It were both untrue in itself, and unfair to our nature to say, that an act of revenge but exasperates the more, and always augments, or even often augments, a hostile disposition towards its object. It has been said that we hate the man whom we have injured: but whatever the truth of this observation may be, certain it is, that we do not so hate the man of whom we have taken full satisfaction for having injured us; or, if we could imagine aught so monstrous, and happily so rare, as the prolonged, the yet unquelled satisfaction of one, who could be regaled for hours with the sighs of him whom his own hands had wounded; or, for months and years, with the pining destitution of the household whom himself had impoverished and brought low; this were because the measure of the revenge had not equalled the measure of the felt provocation, only perhaps to be appeased and satiated by death. This, at length, would terminate the emotion. And here a new insight opens upon us into the distinction between a good and a bad affection. Benevolence, itself of immortal quality,

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would immortalize its objects: malignity, if not appeased, by an infliction short of death, would destroy them.* The one is ever strengthening itself upon old objects, and fastening upon new ones; the other is ever extinguishing its resentment towards old objects by the pettier acts of chastisement, or, if nothing short of a capital punishment will appease it, by dying with their death. The exterminating blow, the death which "clears all scores"—this forms the natural and necessary limit even to the fiercest revenge; whereas, the outgoings of benevolence are quite indefinite. In revenge, the affection is successively extinguished; and, if relumed, it is upon new objects. In benevolence, the affection is kept up for old objects, while ever open to excitement from new ones; and hence a living and a multiplying power of enjoyment, which is peculiarly its own. On the same principle that we water a shrub just because we had planted it, does our friendship grow and ripen the more towards him on whom we had formerly exercised it. The affection of kindness for each individual object survives the act of kindness, or, rather, is strengthened by the act. Whatever sweetness may have been originally in it, is enhanced by the exercise; and, so far from being stifled by the first gratification, it remains in greater freshness than ever for higher and larger gratifications than before. It is the perennial quality of their gratification, which stamps that superiority on the good affections, we are now contending for. Benevolence

* So true it is, that he who hateth his brother with implacable hatred is a murderer.

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both perpetuates itself upon its old objects, and expands itself into a wider circle as it meets with new ones. Not so with revenge, which generally disposes of the old object by one gratification; and then must transfer itself to a new object, ere it can meet with another gratification. Let us grant that each affection has its peculiar walk of enjoyment. The history of the one walk presents us with a series of accumulations; the history of the other with a series of extinctions.

12. But in dwelling on this beautiful peculiarity, by which a good affection is distinguished from a bad one, we are in danger of weakening our immediate argument. We bring forward the matter a great deal too favourably for the malignant desires of the human heart, if, while reasoning on the supposition of an enjoyment, however transitory in their gratification, we give any room for the imagination that even this is unmixed enjoyment. We have already stated, that, of themselves, and anterior to their gratification, there is a painfulness in these desires; and that when by their gratification we get quit of this painfulness, we might after all obtain little more than a relief from misery. But the truth is, that, generally speaking, we obtain a great deal less on the side of happiness than this; for, in most cases, all that we obtain by the gratification of a malignant passion, is but the exchange of one misery for another; and this apart still from the remorse of an evil perpetration. There is one familiar instance of it, which often occurs in conversation—when, piqued by something offensive in the remark or manner of our fellows, we react with

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a severity which humbles and overwhelms him. In this case, the pain of the resentment is succeeded by the pain we feel in the spectacle of that distress which ourselves have created; and this, too, aggravated perhaps by the reprobation of all the by-standers, affording thereby a miniature example of the painful alternations which are constantly taking place in the history of moral evil; when the misery of wrong affections is but replaced, to the perpetrator himself, by the misery of the wrong actions to which they have hurried him. It is thus that a life of frequent gratification may, notwithstanding, be a life of intense wretchedness. It may help our imagination of such a state, to conceive of one, subject every hour to the agonies of hunger, with such a mal-conformation at the same time in his organ of taste, that, in food of every description, he felt a bitter and universal nausea. There were here a constant gratification, yet a constant and severe endurance—a mere alternation of cruel sufferings—the displacement of one set of agonies, by the substitution of other agonies in their room. This is seldom, perhaps never realized in the physical world; but in the moral world it is a great and general phenomenon. The example shows at least the possibility of a constitution, under which a series of incessant gratifications may be nothing better than a restless succession of distress and disquietude; and that such should be the constitution of our moral nature as to make a life of vice a life of vanity and cruel vexation, is strong experimental evidence of Him who ordained this

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constitution, that He hateth iniquity, that He loveth righteousness.

13. But the peculiarity which we have been incidentally led to notice, is, in itself, pregnant with inference also. We should augur hopefully of the final issues of our moral constitution, as well as conclude favourably of Him who hath ordained it —when we find its workings to be such, that, on the one hand, the feeling of kindness towards an individual object, not only survives, but is indefinitely strengthened by the acts of kindness; and, on the other hand, that, not only does an act of revenge satiate and put an end to the feeling of revenge, but even, that certain acts of hostility towards the individual object of our hatred will make us relent from this hatred, and at length extinguish it altogether. May we not perceive in this economy a balance in point of tendency, and at length of ultimate effect on the side of virtue? May it not warrant the expectation, that, while benevolence, that great conservative principle of being, has in it a principle conservative of itself as well as of its objects, the outbreakings of evil are but partial and temporary; and that the moral world, viewed as a progressive system and now only in its transition state, has been so constructed as to secure both the perpetuity of all the good affections, and the indefinite expansion of them to new objects and over a larger and ever-widening territory? At all events, whatever reason there may be to fear, that, in the future arrangements of nature and providence, both virtue and vice will

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be capable of immortality—we might gather from what passes under our eyes, in this rudimental and incipient stage of human existence, that even with our present constitution virtue alone is capable of a blissful immortality. For malice and falsehood carry in them the seeds of their own wretchedness, if not of their own destruction. Only grant the soul to be imperishable; and if the character of the governor is to be gathered from the final issues of the government over which he presides—it says much for the moral character of Him who framed us, that, unless there be an utter reversal of the nature which Himself has given, then, in respect to the power of conferring enjoyment or of maintaining the soul in its healthiest and happiest mood, it is righteousness alone which endureth for ever, and charity alone which never faileth.

14. And beside taking account of the special enjoyments which attach to the special virtues, we might observe on the general state of that mind, which, under the consistent and comprehensive principle of being or doing what it ought, studies rightly to acquit itself of all the moral obligations. Beside the perpetual feast of an approving conscience, and the constant recurrence of those particular gratifications which attach to the indulgence of every good affection—is it not quite obvious of every mind which places itself under a supreme regimen of morality, that then, it is in its best possible condition with regard to enjoyment: like a well-strung instrument, in right and proper tone, because all its parts are put in right adjustment with each other? If conscience be indeed

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the superior faculty of our nature, then, every time it is cast down from this pre-eminence, there must be a sensation of painful dissonance; and the whole man feels out of sorts, as one unhinged or denaturalized. This perhaps is the main reason that a state of well-doing stands associated with a state of well-being; and why the special virtue of temperance is not more closely associated with the health of the body, than the general habit of virtue is with a wholesome and well-conditioned state of the soul. There is then no derangement as it were in the system of our nature—all the powers, whether superior or subordinate, being in their right places, and all moving without discord and without dislocation. It were anticipating our argument, did we refer at present to the confidence and regard wherewith a virtuous man is surrounded in the world. We have not yet spoken of the adaptations to man's moral constitution from without, but only of the inward pleasures and satisfactions which are yielded in the workings of the constitution itself. And surely when we find it to have been so constructed and attuned by its Maker, that, in all the movements of virtue there is a felt and grateful harmony, while a certain jarring sense of violence and discomposure ever attends upon the opposite—we cannot imagine how the moral character of that being who Himself devised this constitution and established all its tendencies, can be more clearly or convincingly read, than in phenomena like these.

15. We have already said that the distinction so well established by Butler, between the object of

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our affection and its accompanying, nay, inseparable pleasure, was the most effectual argument that could be brought to bear against the selfish system of morals. The virtuous affection that is in a man's breast simply leads him to do what he ought; and in that object he rests and terminates. Like every other affection, there must be a pleasure conjoined with the prosecution of it; and at last, a full and final gratification in the attainment of its object. But the object must be distinct from the pleasure, which itself is founded on a prior suitableness between the mind and its object. When a man is actuated by a virtuous desire; it is the virtue itself that he is seeking, and not the gratification that is in it. His single object is to be or to do rightly—though, the more intent he is upon this object, the greater will, the greater must be his satisfaction if he succeed in it. Nevertheless, it is not the satisfaction which he is seeking; it is the object which yields the satisfaction—the object too for its own sake, and not for the sake of its accompanying or its resulting enjoyment. Nay, the more strongly and therefore the more exclusively set upon virtue for its own sake; the less will he think of its enjoyment, and yet the greater will his actual enjoyment be. In other words, virtue, the more disinterested it is, is the more prolific of happiness to him who follows it; and then it is, that, when freest of all from the taints of mercenary selfishness, it yields to its votary the most perfect and supreme enjoyment. Such is the constitution of our nature, that virtue loses not its disinterested character; and yet man loses not

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his reward; and the author of this constitution. He who hath ordained all its laws and its consequences, has given signal proof of His own supreme regard for virtue, and therefore of the supreme virtue of His own character, in that He hath so framed the creatures of His will, as that their perfect goodness and perfect happiness are at one. Yet the union of these does not constitute their unity. The union is a contingent appointment of the Deity; and so is at once the evidence and the effect of the goodness that is in His own nature.

16. This then is our second argument for the moral character of God, grounded on the moral constitution of man; and prior, as yet, to any view of its adaptation to external nature. It is distinct from the first argument, as grounded on the phenomena of conscience, which assumes the office of a judge within the breast, all whose decisions are on the side of benevolence and justice; and which is ever armed with a certain power of enforcement, both in the pains of remorse and the pleasures of self-approbation. These, however, are distinct and ought to be distinguished from the direct pleasures of virtue in itself, and the direct pains of vice in itself, which form truly separate ingredients, on the one hand of a present and often very painful correction, on the other hand, of a present and very precious reward.

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CHAPTER IV.

The Power and Operation of Habit.

1. We have as yet been occupied with what may be termed the instant sensations, wherewith morality is beset in the mind of man—with the voice of conscience which goes immediately before, or with the sentence whether of approval or condemnation, which comes immediately after it; and latterly, with those states of feeling which are experienced at the moment when under the power of those affections, to which any moral designation, be it of virtue or vice, is applicable—the pleasure which there is in the very presence and contact of the one, the distaste, the bitterness which there is in the presence and contact of the other.

2. These phenomena of juxtaposition, as they may be termed; these contiguous antecedents and consequents of the moral and the immoral in man, speak strongly the purpose of Him who ordained our mental constitution, in having inserted there such a constant power of command and encouragement on the side of the former, and a like constant operation of checks and discouragements against the latter. But, perhaps, something more may be collected of the design and character of God, by stretching forward our observation prospectively in the history of man, and so extending our regards to the more distant consequences of virtue or vice, both on the frame of his character and the state of

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his enjoyments. By studying these posterior results, we approximate our views towards the final issues of that administration under which we are placed. That defensive apparatus, wherewith the embryo seed of plants is guarded and protected, might indicate a special care or design in the preserver of it. What that design particularly is comes to be clearly and certainly known, when, in the future history of the plant, we learn what the functions of the seed are, after it has come to maturity; and then observe, that, had it been suffered universally to perish, it would have led —not to the mortality of the individual, for that is already an inevitable law, but to the extinction and mortality of the species.

3. For tracing forward man's moral history, or the changes which take place in his moral state, it is necessary that we should advert to the influence of habit. Yet it is not properly the philosophy of habit wherewith our argument is concerned, but with the leading facts of its practical operation. A beneficial effect might still remain an evidence of the divine goodness, by whatever steps it should be efficiently or physically brought about—its power in this way depending not on the question how it is, but on the fact that so it is. It were really, therefore, deviating from our own strict and pertinent line of inquiry, did we stop to discuss the philosophic theory of habit, or suspend our own independent reasoning till that theory was settled—beside most unwisely and unnecessarily attaching to our theme, all the discredit of an obscure or questionable speculation. It is with

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palpable and sure results both in the material and mental world, more than with the recondite processes in either, that theism has chiefly to do; and it is by the former more than by the latter that the cause of theism is upholden.

4. We might only observe, in passing, that the modification introduced by Dr. Thomas Brown into the theory of habit, was perhaps uncalled for, even for the accomplishment of his own purpose, which was to demonstrate that it required no peculiar or original law of the human constitution to account for its phenomena. He resolves the whole operation of habit into the law of suggestion—only, he would extend that law to states of feelings, as well as to thoughts or states of thought.* We are all aware that if two objects have been seen or thought of together on any former occasion, then the thought of one of them is apt to suggest the thought of the other, and the more apt the more frequently that the suggestion has taken place—insomuch, that, if the suggestion have taken place very often,

* The following is the passage taken from his forty-third lecture, in which Dr. Brown seems to connect feeling with feeling by the same mental law which connects thought with thought. "To explain the influence of habit in increasing the tendency to certain actions I must remark—what I have already more than once repeated—that the suggesting influence which is usually expressed in the phrase *association of ideas*, though that very improper phrase would seem to limit it to our ideas or conceptions only, and has unquestionably produced a mistaken belief of this partial operation of a general influence—is not limited to those more than to any other states of mind, but occurs also with equal force in other feelings, which are not commonly termed ideas or conceptions; that our desires or other emotions, for example, may, like them, form a part of our trains of suggestion," &c. See another equally ambiguous passage in his sixty-fourth lecture.

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we shall find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to break the succession between the thought which suggests and the thought which is suggested by it. Now Dr. Brown has conceived it necessary to extend this principle to feelings as well as thoughts —insomuch, that, if on a former occasion a certain object have been followed up by a certain feeling, or even if one feeling have been followed up by another, then the thought of the object introduces the feeling, or the one feeling introduces the other feeling into the mind, on the same principle that thought introduces thought. Now we should rather be inclined to hold that thought introduces feeling, not in consequence of the same law of suggestion whereby thought introduces thought, but in virtue of the direct power which lies in the object of the thought to excite that feeling. When a voluptuous object awakens a voluptuous feeling, this is not by suggestion, but by a direct influence of its own. When the picture of that voluptuous object awakens the same voluptuous feeling, we would not ascribe it to suggestion, but still put it down to the power of the object, whether presented or only represented, to awaken certain emotions. And as little would we ascribe the excitement of the feeling to suggestion, but still to the direct and original power of the object—though it were pictured to us only in thought, instead of being pictured to us in visible imagery. In like manner, when the thought of an injury awakens in us anger, even as the injury itself did at the moment of its infliction, we should not ascribe this to that peculiar law which is termed the law of suggestion, and which undoubtedly

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connects thought with thought. But we should ascribe it wholly to that law which connects an object with its appropriate emotion—whether that object be present to the senses, or have only been recalled by the memory and is present to the thoughts. We sustain an injury, and we feel resentment in consequence, without surely, the law of suggestion having had aught to do with the sequence. We see the aggressor afterwards, and our anger is revived against him, and with this particular succession the law of suggestion has certainly had to do—not, however, in the way of thought suggesting feeling, but only in the way of thought suggesting thought. In truth it is a succession of three terms. The sight of the man awakens a recollection of the injury; and the thought of the injury awakens the emotion. The first sequence, or that which obtains between the first and second term, is a pure instance of the suggestion of thought by thought, or, to speak in the old language, of the association of ideas. The second sequence, or that which obtains between the middle and last term, is still, Dr. Brown would say, not an instance of suggestion, but of thought suggesting the feeling wherewith it was formerly accompanied. Whereas, in our apprehension, it is due, not to the law of suggestion, but to the law which connects an object, whether present at the time or thought upon afterwards, with its counterpart emotion. Still the result is the same, however differently accounted for. One can think, surely, of the resentment which now occupies him, as well as he can think of a past resentment—indeed it is

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difficult to imagine how he can feel a resentment without thinking of it. Let some one thought, then, by the proper law of suggestion, have introduced the thought of an injury that had been done to us; this second thought introduces the feeling of resentment, not by the law of suggestion, but by the law which relates an object, whether present or thought upon, to its appropriate emotion; this emotion is thought upon, and, not the emotion, but the thought of the emotion recalls the thought of the first emotion that was felt at the original infliction of the injury; and this thought again recalls to us the thought of the injury itself, and perhaps the thought of other or similar injuries, which, as at the first, excites anew the feeling of anger, but, at this particular step, by means of a law different from that of suggestion, even the law of our emotions, in virtue of which, certain objects, when present in any way to the cognizance of the understanding, awaken certain sensibilities in the heart. It is thus that thoughts and feelings might reciprocally introduce each other, not by means of but one law of suggestion extending in common to them both, but by the intermingling of two laws in this repeating or circulating process,—even the law of suggestion, acting only upon the thoughts; and the law of emotion, by which certain objects, when presented to the senses or to the memory, have the power to awaken certain correspondent emotions. We in this way get quit of the mysticism which attaches to the notion of mere feelings either suggesting or being suggested by other feelings, separately from thoughts—more especially when,

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by the association of thoughts or of ideas alone, and the direct power which lies in the objects of these ideas to awaken certain emotions, all the phenomena, *as far as they depend on suggestion*, are capable of being explained. A certain thought or object may suggest the thought of a former provocation; this thought might excite a feeling of resentment; the resentment, thus felt or thought upon, might send back the mind to a still more vivid impression of its original cause; and this again might prolong or awaken the resentment anew, and in greater freshness than before. The ultimate effect might be a fierce and fiery effervescence of irascible feeling. Yet not by the operation of one law, but of two distinct laws in the human constitution; the first that, in virtue of which, thoughts suggest thoughts; the second that, in virtue of which, the object thus thought upon awakens the emotion that is suited to it.

5. But while we have ventured to offer this correction on the language of Dr. Brown, we are far from being satisfied that the law of suggestion alone will account for the evergrowing inveteracy of habit. It supplies, we think, a strong auxiliary force; but is not the only force concerned in the operation. It accounts for the increased importunity of the solicitations from without; but, over and above this, we apprehend that the progress of repeated indulgence induces a subjective change upon the mind—in virtue of which, there is an increasing susceptibility, or rather a greater strength, if it may be so called, of inertia or passiveness within—so that the propensities become every day

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more headlong, and that too with a less power of resistance than before.

6. But though for once we have thus adverted to the strict philosophy of the subject, it will be apparent, that, in this instance, it is of no practical necessity for the purposes of our argument; and it is truly the same in many other instances, where, if instead of reasoning theologically on the palpable operations of the mechanism, we should reason scientifically on the *modus operandi*, we would run into really irrelevant discussions. The theme of our present chapter is the effects of Habit, in as far as these effects serve to indicate the design or character of Him who is the author of our mental constitution. It matters not to any conclusion of ours, by what recondite, or, it may be, yet undiscovered process these effects are brought about; and whether the common theory, or that of Dr. Brown, or that again as modified and corrected by ourselves, is the just one. It is enough to know, that, if any given process of intermingled thought and feeling have been described by us once, there are laws at work, which, on the first step of that process again recurring, would incline us to describe the whole of the process over again; and with the greater power and certainty, the more frequently that process has been repeated. We are perfectly sure that the more frequently any particular sequence between thought and thought may have occurred, the more readily will it recur;—so that when once the first thought has entered the mind, we may all the more confidently reckon on its being followed up

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by the second. This, so far at least as suggestion is concerned, we hold enough for explaining the ever recurring force and facility, wherewith feelings also will arise and be followed up by their indulgence—and that, just in proportion to the frequency wherewith in given circumstances they have been awakened and indulged formerly. In as far as the objects of gratification are the exciting causes which stimulate and awaken the desires of gratification, then, any process which ensures the presence and application of the causes, will also ensure the fulfilment of the effects which result from them. If it be the presence or perception of the wine that stands before us which stirs up the appetite; and if, instead of acting on the precept of looking not unto the wine when it is red, we continue to look till the appetite be so inflamed that the indulgence becomes inevitable—then, as we looked at it continuously when present, will we, by the law of suggestion, be apt to think of it continuously when absent. If the one continuity was not broken by any considerations of principle or prudence—so the less readily will the other continuity be broken in like manner. When we revisit the next social company, we shall probably resign ourselves to the very order of sensations that we did formerly; and the more surely, the oftener that that order has already been described by us. And as the order of objects with their sensations when present, so is the order of thoughts with their desires when absent. This order forces itself upon the mind with a strength proportional to the frequency of its repetition; and desires, when not evaded by

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the mind shifting its attention away from the objects of them, can only be appeased by their indulgence.

7. It is thus that he who enters on a career of vice, enters on a career of headlong degeneracy. If even for once we have described that process of thought and feeling, which leads, whether through the imagination or the senses, from the first presentation of a tempting object to a guilty indulgence —this of itself establishes a probability, that, on the recurrence of that object, we shall pass onward by the same steps to the same consummation. And it is a probability ever strengthening with every repetition of the process, till at length it advances towards the moral certainty of a helpless surrender to the tyranny of those evil passions, which we cannot resist, just because the will itself is in thraldom, and we choose not to resist them. It is thus that we might trace the progress of intemperance and licentiousness, and even of dishonesty, to whose respective solicitations we have yielded at the first—till by continuing to yield, we become the passive, the prostrate subjects of a force that is uncontrollable, only because we have seldom or never in good earnest tried to control it. It is not that we are struck of a sudden with moral impotency; but we are gradually benumbed into it. The power of temptation has not made instant seizure upon the faculties, or taken them by storm. It proceeds by an influence that is gentle and almost insensibly progressive—just as progressive in truth, as the association between particular ideas is strengthened by the frequency of their succession.

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But even as that association may at length become inveterate, insomuch that when the first idea finds entry into the mind, we cannot withstand the importunity wherewith the second insists upon following it; so might the moral habit become alike inveterate—thoughts succeeding thoughts, and urging onward their counterpart desires, in that wonted order, which had hitherto connected the beginning of a temptation with its full and final victory. At each repetition, would he find it more difficult to break this order, or to lay an arrest upon it—till at length, as the fruit of this wretched regimen, its unhappy patient is lorded over by a power of moral evil, which possesses the whole man, and wields an irresistible or rather an unresisted ascendancy over him.

8. But this melancholy process, leading to a vicious indulgence, may be counteracted by an opposite process of resistance, though with far greater facility at the first—yet a facility ever augmenting, in proportion as the effectual resistance of temptation is persevered in. That balancing moment, at which pleasure would allure, and conscience is urging us to refrain, may be regarded as the point of departure or divergency, whence one or other of the two processes will take their commencement. Each of them consists in a particular succession of ideas with their attendant feelings; and whichever of them may happen to be described once, has, by the law of suggestion, the greater chance, in the same circumstances, of being described over again. Should the mind dwell on an object of allurement, and the consideration of

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principle not to be entertained—it will pass onward from the first incitement to the final and guilty indulgence by a series of stepping-stones, each of which will present itself more readily in future; and with less chance of arrest or interruption by the suggestions of conscience than before. But should these suggestions be admitted, and far more should they prevail—then, on the principle of association, will they be all the more apt to intervene, on the repetition of the same circumstances; and again break that line of continuity, which, but for this intervention, would have led from a temptation to a turpitude or a crime. If on the occurrence of a temptation formerly, conscience did interpose, and represent the evil of a compliance, and so impress the man with a sense of obligation, as led him to dismiss the fascinating object from the presence of his mind, or to hurry away from it—the likelihood is, that the recurrence of a similar temptation will suggest the same train of thoughts and feelings and lead to the same beneficial result; and this is a likelihood ever increasing with every repetition of the process. The train which would have terminated in a vicious indulgence, is dispossessed by the train which conducts to a resolution and an act of virtuous self-denial. The thoughts which tend to awaken emotions and purposes on the side of duty find readier entrance into the mind; and the thoughts which awaken and urge forward the desire of what is evil more readily give way. The positive force on the side of vitrue is augmented, by every repetition of the train which leads to a

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virtuous determination. The resistance to this force on the side of vice is weakened, in proportion to the frequency wherewith that train of suggestions which would have led to a vicious indulgence, is broken and discomfited. It is thus that when one is successfully resolute in his opposition to evil, the power of making the achievement and the facility of the achievement itself are both upon the increase; and virtue makes double gain to herself, by every separate conquest which she may have won. The humbler attainments of moral worth are first mastered and secured; and the aspiring disciple may pass onward in a career that is quite indefinite to nobler deeds and nobler sacrifices.

9. And this law of habit when enlisted on the side of righteousness, not only strengthens and makes sure our resistance to vice, but facilitates the most arduous performances of virtue. The man whose thoughts, with the purposes and doings to which they lead, are at the bidding of conscience, will, by frequent repetition, at length describe the same track almost spontaneously—even as in physical education, things laboriously learned at the first, come to be done at last without the feeling of an effort. And so, in moral education, every new achievement of principle smooths the way to future achievements of the same kind; and the precious fruit or purchase of each moral victory is to set us on higher and firmer vantage-ground for the conquests of principle in all time coming. He who resolutely bids away the suggestions of avarice, when they come into conflict with the incumbent generosity; or the suggestions of

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voluptuousness, when they come into conflict with the incumbent self-denial; or the suggestions of anger, when they come into conflict with the incumbent act of magnanimity and forbearance—will at length obtain, not a respite only, but a final deliverance from their intrusion. Conscience, the longer it has made way over the obstacles of selfishness and passion—the less will it give way to these adverse forces, themselves weakened by the repeated defeats which they have sustained in warfare of moral discipline: Or, in other words, the oftener that conscience makes good the supremacy which she claims—the greater would be the work of violence, and less the strength for its accomplishment, to cast her down from that station of practical guidance and command which of right belongs to her. It is in great part because, in virtue of the law of suggestion, those trains of thought and feeling, which connect her first biddings with their final execution, are the less exposed at every new instance to be disturbed, and the more likely to be repeated over again, that every good principle is more strengthened by its exercise, and every good affection is more strengthened by its indulgence than before. The acts of virtue ripen into habits; and the goodly and permanent result is, the formation or establishment of a virtuous character.

10. This then forms a distinct argument in the mental constitution for the virtuous character of Him who ordained it. The voice of authority within, bidding us to virtue; and the immediate delights attendant on obedience, certainly, speak strongly for the moral character of that administra-

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tion under which we are placed. But, by looking to posterior and permanent results, we have the advantage of viewing the system of that administration in progress. Instead of the insulated acts, we are led to regard the abiding and the accumulating consequences—and by stretching forward our observation through larger intervals and to more distant points in the moral history of men; we are in likelier circumstances for obtaining a glimpse of their final destination; and so of seizing on this mighty and mysterious secret—the reigning policy of the divine government, whence we might collect the character of Him who hath ordained it. And surely, it is of prime importance to be noted in this examination, that by every act of virtue we become more powerful for its service; and by every act of vice we become more helplessly its slaves. Or, in other words, were these respective moral regimens fully developed into their respective consummations, it would seem, as if by the one, we should be conducted to that state, where the faculty within, which is felt to be the rightful, would also become the reigning sovereign, and then we should have the full enjoyment of all the harmony and happiness attendant upon virtue—whereas, by the other, those passions of our nature felt to be inferior, would obtain the lawless ascendency, and subject their wretched bondsmen to the turbulence, and the agony, and the sense of degradation, which, by the very constitution of our being, are inseparable from the reign of moral evil.

11. We might not fully comprehend the design or meaning of a process, till we have seen the end

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of it. Had there been no death, the mystery of our present state might have been somewhat alleviated. We might then have seen, in bolder relief and indelible character, the respective consummations of vice and virtue—perhaps the world partitioned into distinct moral territories, where the habit of many centuries had given fixture and establishment, first, to a society of the upright, now in the firm possession of all goodness, as the well-earned result of that wholesome discipline through which they had passed; and, second, to a society of the reprobate, now hardened in all iniquity, and abandoned to the violence of evil passions no longer to be controlled and never to be eradicated. We might then have witnessed the peace, the contentment, the universal confidence and love, the melody of soul, that reigned in the dwellings of the righteous; and contrasted these with the disquietudes, the strifes, the fell and fierce collisions of injustice and mutual disdain and hate implacable, the frantic bacchanalian excesses with their dreary intervals of remorse and lassitude, which kept the other region in perpetual anarchy, and which, constituted as we are, must trouble or dry up all the well-springs of enjoyment, whether in the hearts of individuals or in the bosom of families. We could have been at no loss, to have divined, from the history and state of such a world, the policy of its ruler. We should have recognised in that peculiar economy, by which every act, whether of virtue or vice, made its performer still more virtuous or more vicious than before, a moral remuneration on the one hand

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and a moral penalty on the other—with an enhancement of all the consequences, whether good or evil, which flowed from each of them. We could not have mistaken the purposes and mind of the Deity—when we saw thus palpably, and through the demonstrations of experience, the ultimate effects of these respective processes; and, in this total diversity of character, with a like total diversity of condition, were made to perceive, that righteousness was its own eternal reward, and that wickedness was followed up, and that for ever, with the bitter fruit of its own ways.

12. Death so far intercepts the view of this result, that it is not here the object of sight or of experience. Still, however, it remains the object of our likely anticipation. The truth is, that the process which we are now contemplating, the process by which character is formed and strengthened and perpetuated, suggests one of the strongest arguments within compass of the light of nature, for the immortality of the soul. In the system of the world we behold so many adaptations, not only between the faculties of sentient beings, and their counterpart objects in external nature; but between every historical progression in nature, and a fulfilment of corresponding interest or magnitude which it ultimately lands in—that we cannot believe of man's moral history, as if it terminated in death. More especially when we think of the virtuous character, how laboriously it is reared, and how slowly it advances to perfection; but, at length, how indefinite its capabilities of power and of enjoyment are, after this education of habits has

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been completed—it seems like the breach of a great and general analogy, if man is to be suddenly arrested on his way to the magnificent result, for which it might well be deemed that the whole of his life was but a preparation; having just reached the full capacity of an enjoyment, of which he had only been permitted, in this evanescent scene, a few brief and passing foretastes. It were like the infliction of a violence on the continuity of things, of which we behold no similar example, if a being so gifted were thus left to perish in the full maturity of his powers and moral acquisitions. The very eminence that he has won, we naturally look upon as the guarantee and the precursor of some great enlargement beyond it—warranting the hope, therefore, that Death but transforms without destroying him, or, that the present is only an embryo or rudimental state, the final development of which is in another and future state of existence.

13. This is not the right place for a full exposition of this argument. We might only observe, that there is an evidence of man's immortality, in the moral state and history of the bad upon earth, as well as of the good. The truth is, that nature's most vivid anticipations of a conscious futurity on the other side of death, are the forebodings of guilty fear, not the bright anticipations of confident and rejoicing hope. We speak not merely of the unredressed wrongs inflicted by the evil upon the righteous, and which seem to demand an afterplace of reparation and vengeance. Beside those unsettled questions between man and man, which death breaks off at the middle, and for the adjust-

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ment of which one feels as if it were the cry of eternal justice that there should be a reckoning afterwards—beside these, there is felt, more directly and vividly still, the sense of a yet unsettled controversy, between the sinner and the God whom he has offended. The notion of immortality is far more powerfully and habitually suggested by the perpetual hauntings or misgivings of this sort of undefined terror, by the dread of a coming penalty—rather than by the consciousness of merit, or of a yet unsatisfied claim to a well-earned reward. Nor is the argument at all lessened by that observed phenomenon in the history of guilt, the decay of conscience; a hebetude, if it may be so termed, of the moral sensibilities, which keeps pace with the growth of a man's wickedness, and, at times, becomes quite inveterate towards the termination of his mortal career. The very torpor and tranquillity of such a state, would only appear all the more emphatically to tell, that a day of account is yet to come, when, instead of rioting, as heretofore, in the impunity of a hardihood that shields him alike from reproach and fear, conscience will at length re-awaken to upbraid him for his misdoings; at once the asserter of its own cause, and the executioner of its own sentence. And even the most desperate in crime, do experience, at times, such gleams and resuscitations of moral light, as themselves feel to be the precursors of a revelation still more tremendous—when their own conscience, fully let loose upon them, shall, in the hands of an angry God, be a minister of fiercest vengeance. Certain it is, that, if death, instead

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of an entire annihilation, be but a removal to another and a different scene of existence, we see in this, when combined with the known laws and processes of the mind, the possibility, at least, of such a consummation. There is much in the business, and entertainments, and converse, and day-light of that urgent and obtruding world by which we are surrounded, to carry off the attention of the mind from its own guiltiness, and so, to suspend that agony, which, when thrown back upon itself and dissevered from all its objects of gratification, will be felt, without mitigation and without respite. In the busy whirl of life, the mind, drawn upon in all directions, can find, outwardly and abroad, the relief of a constant diversion from the misery of its own internal processes. But a slight change in its locality or its circumstances, would deliver it up to the full burden and agony of these; nor can we imagine a more intense and intolerable wretchedness, than that which would ensue, simply by rescinding the connexion which obtains in this world between a depraved mind and its external means of gratification—when, forced inwardly on its own haunted tenement, it met with nothing there but revenge unsatiated; and raging appetites, that never rest from their unappeased fermentation; and withal, joined to this perpetual sense of want, a pungent and pervading sense of worthlessness. It is the constant testimony of criminals, that, in the horrors and the tedium of solitary imprisonment, they undergo the most appalling of all penalties—a penalty, therefore, made up of moral elements

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alone; as, neither pain, nor hunger, nor sickness, necessarily forms any of its ingredients. It strikingly demonstrates the character of Him who so constructed our moral nature, that from the workings of its mechanism alone, there should be evolved a suffering so tremendous on the children of iniquity, insomuch that a sinner meets with sorest vengeance when simply left to the fruit of his own ways—whether by the death which carries his disembodied spirit to its Tartarus; or by a resurrection to another scene of existence, where, in full possession of his earthly habits and earthly passions, he is nevertheless doomed to everlasting separation from their present counterpart and earthly enjoyments.

14. There is a distinction sometimes made between the natural and arbitrary rewards of virtue, or between the natural and arbitrary punishments of vice. The arbitrary is exemplified in the enactments of human law; there in general being no natural or necessary connexion between the crimes which it denounces, and the penalties which it ordains for them—as between the fine, or the imprisonment, or the death, upon the one hand; and the act of violence, whether more or less outrageous, upon the other. The natural again is exemplified in the workings of the human constitution; there being a connexion, in necessity and nature, between the temper which prompted the act of violence, and the wretchedness which it inflicts on him who is the unhappy subject, in his own bosom, of its fierce and restless agitations. It is thus that not only is virtue termed its own

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reward, but vice its own greatest plague or self-tormentor. We have no information of the arbitrary rewards or punishments in a future state, but from revelation alone. But of the natural, we have only to suppose that the existing constitution of man, and his existing habits, shall be borne with him to the land of eternity; and we may inform ourselves now of these, by the experience of our own felt and familiar nature. Our own experience can tell that the native delights of virtue, unaided by any high physical gratifications, and only if not disturbed by grievous physical annoyances, were enough of themselves to constitute an elysium of pure and perennial happiness: and again, that the native agonies of vice, unaided by any inflictions of physical suffering, and only if unalleviated by a perpetual round of physical enjoyments, were enough of themselves to constitute a dire and dreadful Pandemonium. They are not judicially awarded, but result from the workings of that constitution which God hath given to us; and they speak as decisively the purpose and character of Him who is the author of that constitution—as would any code of jurisprudence proclaimed from the sanctuary of heaven, and which assigned to virtue on the one hand, the honours and rewards of a blissful immortality, to vice on the other a place of anguish among the outcasts of a fiery condemnation.

END OF VOLUME I.

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